

LIFE OF
SAYAJI RAO III
MAHARAJA OF BARODA



HIS HIGHNESS MAHARAJA SAYAJI RAO GAEKWAR III
*Sena Khas Khel, Samsber Bahadur, Farzand-i-Khas-i-Dowlat-i-Inglishta, G.C.S.I.,
G.C.I.E., Maharaja of Baroda*

LIFE OF
SAYAJI RAO III
MAHARAJA of BARODA

By STANLEY RICE

AUTHOR OF 'THE CHALLENGE OF ASIA'

VOLUME II

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Chapter Eleven

GATHERING CLOUDS: SEDITION AND THE DELHI DURBAR

THE terrible storm which raged through India between the years 1907 and 1911 has passed into history. A seemingly unending stream of abuse and hatred of the British and their government poured from the editorial offices of the 'Nationalist' Press. No incident was too remote, no subject was too sacred, to be called in aid of the campaign of calumny. Each editor outdid the last in dithyrambic expression. Degenerate youths who handled pistol and bomb were hailed as martyrs in the holy cause of Freedom and the Motherland. The platform was as busy as the Press, and the speeches of men of intellect and force, who may have intended to use, or may have been unable to control, the forces they had let loose with their fiery eloquence, were disseminated through the country, translated into one or other of the many vernaculars, and did the work of others whose zeal was as eager as, though their capacity was far below, that of the original master. Murder was frequently inculcated by, and sometimes followed upon these flaming utterances. Two ladies were the earliest victims, mistaken in the dark for an obnoxious magistrate; Mr. Jackson, the blameless Collector of Nasik, scholar and friend of India, was shot at an entertainment given in his honour. In the far south Mr. Ashe, Collector of Tinnevely, was shot in a railway carriage. Attempts and conspiracies were of constant occurrence, and the conscience of England was profoundly shocked when Sir William Curzon Wylie was murdered, together with the brave Parsi who gave his life in vain, in a public hall in London. You never knew, when you opened your newspaper, what fresh outrage, what new murder it might announce.

One is loath to dwell upon these painful years, and it is needless to enter into overmuch detail. Let the dead past bury its dead. So much it has been necessary to say, if only by way of reminder of the atmosphere in which Englishmen in India were then compelled to live and serve. It is easy now to hold from the calm harbour of an office chair that many people fell under unwarrantable suspicion and that much was attributed which was not deserved. In the excitement of those times there was no room for nice discrimination. The worst years since the Mutiny made many a Hindu suspect in English eyes, and the abler he was the more dangerous. In the south the atmosphere was less tense; Bengal and the Deccan vied with each other for the honour of being considered the centre of the storm. Nor did the Indian States escape unscathed. The plague drove some of the disaffected into Kolhapur, where they preached their doctrines for the overthrow of the Prince who claims direct descent from Shivaji. And if the storm centre of Western India was the chief stronghold of the Marathas, was it altogether unnatural that without the clearest proof to the contrary, suspicion should light upon a State ruled over by a Maratha Prince who had never made a secret of his progressive views, and who was applauded by the Nationalist Press? Whether the suspicion was well founded or ill, impartiality must decide upon the facts; but given the conditions of the times, and the temperaments of the chief actors, together with such incidents as lent themselves to misinterpretation, it would have been almost a miracle if some suspicion had not fallen upon Baroda.

In August 1909 Lord Minto addressed the Princes of India on the burning question of sedition. The circumstances of the various States being different, the terms of the letter were not identical. This is the one addressed to Baroda:

‘To

His Highness Farzand-i-Khas-i-Daulat-i-Inglishia Maharaja
Sir Sayaji Rao Gaekwar Sena Khas Khel Shamsheer Bahadur,
G.C.S.I., of Baroda.

My Honoured and Valued Friend,

There is no longer any doubt that seditious people are endeavouring to establish their evil doctrines and practices in the Native States of India. At such a juncture I naturally turn to the Ruling Princes of India to warn them of the danger, and to seek their counsel as to how we can best assist one another to stamp out the common enemy. For the interests of the Ruling Princes and the Paramount Power are the same. A new element has been introduced into the country which not only aims at the embarrassment of the British Administration, but works openly or covertly against the constituted order of society. I trust that Your Highness will agree with me that much good may result from a full, frank, and friendly discussion between us at this juncture on the question how best to keep sedition out of Native States. I shall greatly value the opinion of Your Highness and I shall be glad to know if I can in any way assist you. It is far from my wish to interfere in the internal administration of Native States, but it seems to me to be an occasion for close consultation and a clear understanding of common interests.

I desire to express the high consideration which I entertain for Your Highness, and to subscribe myself,

Your Highness’ sincere friend,

(Signed) Minto,

Viceroy and Governor-General of India.

Simla,

The 6th August 1909.’

To this letter the Maharaja replied on the 19th November. He spoke of ‘seditious people endeavouring to establish their evil doctrines and practices in the Native States of India’,¹ and summarized the Viceroy’s letter as one

¹ *Selected Letters*, vol. ii, No. 865, p. 642, dated 19.11.1909.

‘seeking my counsel how we can best assist one another in stamping out the common enemy’.¹

He went on:

‘I am deeply concerned to find that a new element has unfortunately been introduced into the country which not only aims at the embarrassment of the British administration but works openly or covertly against the constituted order of society.’¹

After pointing out that his efforts to find out what was going on in other States were unsuccessful, and that so far as he could judge only one or two were affected, he continued:

‘Your Excellency rightly observes that the interests of the Ruling Princes and the Paramount Power are identical, and I fully agree with Your Excellency in thinking that much good may result from a full, frank, and friendly discussion on this grave question. It is obviously the duty of every Government to stamp out the forces which make for anarchy and sedition.’¹

He concluded with an assurance of his own ‘deep consciousness of responsibility’ and of his readiness ‘to cordially respond to any reasonable call for co-operation and assistance in repressing anarchy and sedition’. *The Times* correspondent at Calcutta telegraphed to his paper that the Chiefs with one prominent exception had declared that they would gladly adopt any measures recommended. The exception was the Gaekwar of Baroda, who disclaimed knowledge of the extent to which sedition had spread in the Native States and gave only a qualified assurance of his readiness to respond to any reasonable call for assistance against sedition. Sir Valentine Chirol, commenting on the replies of the Princes, says:

‘With the exception of the Gaekwar, whose reply, without

¹ *Selected Letters*, vol. ii, No. 865; p. 642, dated 19.11.1909.

striking any note of substantial dissent, is marked by a certain coolness that has won for him the applause of the Nationalist Press, they responded heartily to the Viceroy's request for suggestions as to the most effective measures to cope with the evil.¹

Now, in the first place it is, to say the least, misleading to say that the Maharaja 'disclaimed' knowledge of the growth of sedition in the States. What he said was that as official information was denied him, he had to rely on the newspapers for the facts. The Maharaja of Rewa, also relying on the newspapers, said that 'the seditionists have endeavoured to gain a footing in certain Native States but I believe they have failed'.² The Maharaja of Mysore, in a long and very cordial letter, promises 'careful consideration to any further suggestions that it may occur to Your Excellency's Government to make to me'.³ The Maharaja of Gwalior thinks that the number of seditious people in Native States must be 'infinitesimal'.⁴ Some of the letters are short and some are long; some lay stress upon the loyalty of the Princes and their subjects, and some do not; some make definite suggestions, others content themselves with more general remarks. What the Nationalist Press may have said on the subject had best remain in oblivion: they perhaps regarded it as their cue to claim the Maharaja as their special friend, and their self-constituted championship of him probably did him more damage than the attacks of his enemies. This championship presumably arose from the liberal views which he had often expressed on the participation of the people in the government, and from his strong advocacy of national expression and self-help in the sphere of internal progress. The wording of the letter was rather

¹ *Indian Unrest*, by Sir V. Chirol, p. 193.

² *The Gazette of India*, Extraordinary, p. 19, dated 22.1.1910.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

more formal than that of the other major Princes, but it struck exactly the same note of co-operation. To say that the letter did not strike 'any note of substantial dissent' is to convey a false and unfair impression of its general tenor. The letter was dated 19th November 1909. Four days before the Maharaja had given a State banquet in Baroda to Lord Minto, and in proposing the toast of his guest he said:

'The friendly relations of my State with the British Government remain unchanged, and the firm and unalterable loyalty of my house to the British Throne remains unshaken. . . . We are inspired by the same object, which is the preservation of peace and public tranquillity, and we are animated by the same wish, which is the promotion of the progress, the prosperity, and the happiness of the people.'¹

And after referring to the Morley-Minto reforms with appreciation because they would open out to the people of India a larger field of activity and inspire them with a greater sense of responsibility in the performance of their civic duties, and expressing the opinion that the people should have a proper share in the administration of the country—sentiments which no doubt the Nationalist Press relished for its own ends—he made a significant allusion to sedition:

'Those on the other hand who confound liberty with licence and seek to undermine authority must be repressed with a firm hand, and not allowed to endanger the public tranquillity or general progress. . . . I cordially acknowledge the ready assistance which my administration receives from Your Excellency's Government, and as cordially I assure Your Excellency of my readiness to respond, within my power, to any call for co-operation with the Government of India.'¹

Reading together the letter and the speech it is difficult

¹ *Speeches and Addresses*, vol. i, p. 247.

to see what was the 'qualified assurance' which the Maharaja gave. In using the word 'reasonable' he was showing his characteristic caution and possibly was thinking of that interference in State matters which he had all along resented and against which he had struggled. In effect, however, this so-called qualification—and there is no other—amounted only to saying, as the Maharaja of Mysore had said, that he would give the suggestions his best consideration. More than this the Government of India could hardly expect. If we understand the States aright, we must always bear in mind that, while they recognize the rights of the Paramount Power and acknowledge the supremacy of the Government of India, they are very jealous of their own sovereign rights within the limits of their territories. Every State which replied to the Viceroy's letter made the reservation express or implied that there must be no unreasonable interference, and those who merely implied it were confident that the Government would not be unreasonable. If, for example, the British Police sought to invade a State, without the permission of the State Government, to carry on searches, and to arrest offenders—as actually happened in Baroda, though no offence was taken and no protest was made—or if the Maharaja of any State was compelled by superior power to do that which he felt was not right, not only Baroda but any other Indian State would have felt that it was being forced to surrender its undoubted rights. The Maharaja had had experience of what he thought was unjustifiable interference, and in using the word 'reasonable' he was employing the language of diplomacy, which never commits itself further than it can help. So is history written.

The general sentiments expressed both in the letter and the speech are reflected in the letters which, however, show resentment at the insinuation that Baroda was

countenancing sedition or was not doing its duty in repressing it. Thus he writes in April 1912:

‘You have read no doubt a lot about sedition in Baroda, and my resolution as a general policy of suppressing it. It was thought pressing by the Resident to express it, though many believed that it was unnecessary to make so much noise about a single case which had judicially failed for want of evidence and was finally departmentally dealt with. . . . The truth is that too much is made out of events which were being dealt with in the ordinary course of business and would probably have attracted no attention at all had not some people gone out of their way and attempted to stir up mud with motives difficult to fathom. It is inconceivable for a State like Baroda to harbour sedition in any form. It would be a suicidal policy to do so. The Resident and the administration had [in the absence of the Maharaja] ample powers to deal with any case arising and the administration was dealing with them. Mr. Seddon was a thoughtful man and was doing all he could. . . . “Give a dog a bad name and hang it.” This proverb was well illustrated in my opinion in the instance of Baroda.’¹

Mr. Seddon was at the time the Dewan. He belonged to the Bombay Civil Service, and had served in several capacities in Baroda State. It was, indeed, a fortunate chance that at this crisis the Maharaja had an Englishman at the head of affairs whose loyalty was beyond dispute by the most critical. Mr. Seddon is the only Englishman who has held the post of Dewan; had any Indian Dewan been in office it might have been said that he looked indifferently upon sedition. That, at any rate, could not be said of one who was bound to be loyal by the traditions of his race as well as by the terms of his service.

¹ *Selected Letters*, vol. ii, No. 1016, p. 711, dated 28.4.1912.

II

The particular case to which the Maharaja alludes was this. In 1909 the Shikshak Press of Mehsana in northern Baroda territories fell under suspicion of having issued a Gujarati edition of the writings of the then famous agitator Arabindo Ghose. Nothing much came of that particular case, but in 1911 the suspicious Press became again the subject of inquiry. It reached the ears of the Government of India that a proscribed Bengali book was printed secretly in Gujarati at this Press and was bound in covers with misleading titles and other false particulars. The Resident began to move in the matter. The State police were set in motion. But meanwhile the police in Bombay obtained a clue. They were told that the seditious literature had been thrown into a well at Navsari, in the south of Baroda, by a clerk who immediately absconded and was never heard of again. An officer of the Bombay Police came to Navsari with a man whom he had arrested in Bombay, and on information given by the latter he found over 500 copies of a very seditious book in the well. The upshot was the discovery of a whole gang of clerks at Mehsana engaged in the dissemination of seditious literature. They were dispersed by transfer to various places under the Minister's orders. One Narsi was banished. The case against the proprietor of the Press broke down, but the Press was confiscated by order of the Maharaja.

During the investigation the Bombay police officer complained to Mr. Seddon that he did not get the slightest help from the Baroda Police, and though he was willing to hand over the case to the State authorities, he doubted whether they would carry it further and spoke of the atmosphere of Baroda as unsympathetic, 'though not hostile like Mehsana'. Both in this case and in other

dealings with sedition, the State officers were alleged to have been either lukewarm or inefficient, and two of them occupying high positions were specially singled out for attack by the Resident. He pressed for the dismissal of both, and added some strong remarks about the atmosphere of Baroda and the general attitude of the administration towards sedition. In the end one was compelled to retire, but the Maharaja gave him a gratuity of Rs. 10,000; the other was transferred to a different department and his personal allowance was stopped for six months.

This, however, was by no means the only case in which the State was called upon to deal with sedition, though it may have been the only one which came to the Maharaja's personal notice. Newspapers were active in Baroda as they were in British India. More than one of them was stopped, either because the editor was unrepentant or because his explanation was not satisfactory. But in at least two cases the Government of India had themselves instructed the Resident to make inquiries, and an unfortunate impression was created that the State authorities were supine unless the Resident made the first move. It certainly did not look well that articles which appeared on the face of them to be objectionable should have been left unnoticed by the State; the Resident observed in one case that 'there was something radically wrong with a system which allowed a licence to be granted to a man of notorious antecedents, while at the same time it was such that it was not certain that if he wrote anything objectionable that would be brought to the notice of the authorities concerned'. Mr. Seddon admitted that the machinery was faulty. The existing Press law was inadequate, and though there was a new Press Act in draft it would take some time before it became law. Moreover, the agency which was supposed to report on publications was not strong enough, and the Press Report Branch whose duty

it was to bring political articles to notice was not all it should be. While promising reform in these directions, he protested that he was the best judge of what could be done under the existing law; there might be genuine difference of opinion on what ought to be possible. On behalf of the State Government he gave the assurance, rendered necessary only by the general complexion of affairs and the attitude of the Resident, that their intention was 'whole-heartedly to co-operate with and assist the British Government in the suppression of seditious literature'. The position of the Dewan was undoubtedly delicate and peculiar. His hands were tied by the provisions of the law; his own information was defective; he had to rely on officers who in the then excited conditions of all India might or might not be 'whole-heartedly co-operating with him', and in two cases of highly placed officials the Resident had openly said that they were unfit to be in the State service. He was an Englishman whose personal loyalty was not, and could not be, suspect; he did what he could, but there was an impression that the fiery writers of tendentious articles fared on the whole better than they had a right to expect, and that in no case was the action taken such as to deter others from fishing in the same troubled waters; if suppression of a paper, and, at the worst, banishment from Baroda was to be the most that they had to fear, it might be worth while to have a run for their money, and at least to get a few articles into print which would serve their purpose, whatever happened later. The Resident thought that the Government was not in earnest, and the views of the Resident were certain to be reflected in his reports to the Government of India. An uncritical public, ignorant of the details and of the difficulties of the situation, jumped as usual to the conclusion that the State was probably disloyal, and saw confirmation of its views in

the applause of the Nationalist Press of what seemed to that party to be the attitude of the Maharaja and of Baroda.

III

During most of the time while these events were taking place His Highness was in Europe. Mr. Seddon, though he could not go so far as the Resident in condemning the whole State, was prepared to take stronger action against the higher officers than his Council would approve. The impression which the Bombay Police formed of the work of the State Police, the opinion of the Resident, and the comparatively mild treatment of the offending officers combined to produce the idea that Baroda did not deal strongly with sedition. The Maharaja writes to Lord Lamington with pained surprise :

‘The report in *The Times* that I have countenanced sedition in my State is very serious, and should not pass uncontradicted. As you know, I have been abroad a great deal during the past two years, leaving the Government in the hands of a Council under the supervision of the Residency. If there has been anything in the State to which blame can be attached it should certainly have been brought to light; but I can scarcely be held personally responsible in my absence. As a matter of fact only one such case has been brought to my notice and in that case I banished the offender at the earliest opportunity.’¹

The truth would seem to be, not that the State or any of the officers had leanings towards sedition, still less any sympathy with the campaign of violence, but that nobody believed that such a thing could exist, unless sporadically, in Baroda. The Maharaja and the Resident were not on cordial terms. He would have strongly resented, if he ever saw it, the note of a conversation between the Resident and the Dewan, both Englishmen, and both Indian Civilians, in which the Resident charged the State

¹ *Selected Letters*, vol. ii, No. 977, p. 692, dated 5.1.1912.

with opposition to the British Government, and declared that from one-fourth to one-third of the people were inclined to sedition. On this Mr. Seddon remarks, 'I said very little, not caring to argue the matter,' thus implying that he did not at all agree, but that argument would have been of little use in the then mood of the Resident, who saw sedition lurking round every street-corner and behind every tree. The Maharaja, as usual, disliked Residency dictation. The two officers who, according to the Resident, were dragging the fair name of Baroda in the mire, were apart from this particular activity much-valued servants, and one of them in after years enjoyed an exceptional measure of His Highness's confidence. Nor was the punishment inflicted, though very far short of what the Resident desired, the arbitrary act of the autocratic Ruler. In sending up one case to the Maharaja, the Dewan said: 'D . . . is more suspected by the British authorities than any other man in Baroda.'¹ But the cases he was able to prepare were not very strong. 'I do not consider that they really prove anything bad in him. But they show a want of discretion and common sense, and they fit in entirely with what I believe his character to be—that of a religious fanatic and visionary.'¹ On the evidence, therefore, and perhaps yielding to pressure, he advised compulsory retirement on a small pension. The gratuity which the Maharaja sanctioned was, in fact, of less pecuniary value.

In the other case Mr. Seddon was inclined to take a sterner view, but the Council, with perhaps an excessive inclination towards leniency, made various suggestions ranging from a confidential reprimand to a transfer to some other Department, with reduction of pay. That was as far as the Dewan was prepared to go, probably in deference to the wishes of the Council, and that was the suggestion actually adopted.

¹ State Records.

After the conclusion of the Mehsana Press affair a general notification was issued in which His Highness 'expressed in the clearest terms my strong disapprobation of such writings and feelings',¹ and declared his 'firm determination to punish and suppress sedition in any form wherever found within the limits of my State'.¹ The terms of the notification are clear and strong; the Maharaja was determined to stand no nonsense.

The Maharaja issued this notification in spite of certain advice that it was not necessary. But his decision was wise and politic. The Maharaja felt that a definite declaration of policy could do no harm and might be of considerable use. Only one case had come up for his definite orders, and he was not fully informed of the various matters, some serious, others only mares' nests, which were continually being sent up to the State authorities. His own conscience was clear enough, and he thought it was rather superfluous to announce to the world what all the world should have known, on the strength of a single case which, taken alone, was of no great importance. Perhaps he was not aware of the extent to which rumour had been busy with his name; perhaps he did not know the intensity of feeling amongst the English community. At any rate the notification had its effect. Shortly after it was issued he had the satisfaction of hearing that the Government of India approved the steps he had taken to prevent the spread of sedition in the State. But public impressions are not removed by Act of Parliament. Suspicion was aroused and was not easy to allay. The dog had been given a bad name, and the public was determined to do its share in the hanging. The key-note of the whole episode was really, not the encouragement or even the tolerance of sedition, but the old dislike of Residency interference. The Resident was,

¹ State Records.

naturally enough, nervous and anxious; the harassed Minister, who was no less anxious for the fair name of the State and for the suppression of sedition, knew the limitations of the law, and neither he nor his Council viewed the situation in quite the same light as the Resident; the Maharaja, far away in Europe, heard only the mutterings of the tumult, but knew enough to feel that the Residency was bringing more pressure to bear than he relished. The visit of a Bombay police officer to Baroda to make searches at Navsari was quite irregular, as no intimation had been given to the State authorities, and though the informal apology of the Political Secretary at Bombay was accepted, the violation of territory was none the less resented. The States are always sensitive when any proceeding seems to savour of an advantage taken by the Paramount Power. They know that if they themselves did anything irregular, they would probably be called to account, and they demand for themselves the same punctilious regard for propriety as is expected of them. It did not, therefore, soothe feelings already ruffled to find that the Bombay Government had itself violated convention, only atoning for it by a casual remark in a semi-official letter to the Minister. The main charge which was directed against the State was ridiculous; the whole business was woefully misunderstood by uninformed opinion, which, to do it justice, has little or no opportunity of knowing the truth, and which drew inferences from what it did know. Unfortunately some of the events seemed to lend colour to those inferences, and the episode serves to illustrate once again the common fallacy of drawing inferences from insufficient data. Worse was to follow.

IV

The great Durbar of 1911, which to thousands and hundreds of thousands was the occasion for such great rejoicing, cannot but be a poignant memory to the Maharaja. He had, quite unjustly, incurred suspicions of disloyalty during the period of sedition, and the Resident of the time had not been looking upon Baroda, its Ruler, and its administration with too friendly an eye. Nor perhaps was it altogether wise to protest to the Viceroy (against the advice of the Resident) against the arrangement of the seats, though it has never appeared that Lord Hardinge was in the least influenced by the indiscretion, if such it was. The Maharaja for some reason was unable to attend the rehearsal, and no amount of coaching by the Resident, the Dewan, or his brother, who attended it in his place, could take the place of personal experience. Moreover, on the morning of the great day he seems to have received unpleasant news, though it is more than doubtful whether this really affected his conduct. All the world knows that he was accused of deliberate insult to the King and Queen by turning his back upon them. The nerves of English visitors were already on edge. They probably—or most of them—knew about as much of Baroda as they knew of Timbuktu, but they knew also that India had passed through a period of sedition and violence in which the Maharaja, thanks to a nervous Press and to the adulation of his would-be friends, had obtained an unenviable notoriety. ‘Give a dog a bad name and hang him,’ he had exclaimed, and in his case the proverb was amply fulfilled. The news was flashed to Europe by the correspondent of *The Times*, and duly appeared with some caustic comments. All over England, where, except to a few, he was not known at all, all over India among the English com-

munity to whom he was known only by reputation, he became familiar as the man who had insulted the King. Actually the charge was preposterous; at the time any one was willing to believe anything that savoured of disloyalty in India, and to construe unfavourably the slightest action that might look like disrespect. In the state of public feeling no one wanted to examine the evidence or to consider even the *a priori* probabilities of such conduct. The recognition of the patent fact that India, however disloyal to a Government, could be, and was still loyal to the person of the King, was swept away on the tide of public passion, aroused by the events of years still fresh in the memory. Such things always happen. If England never quite rose to the heights or sank to the depths of the Hymn of Hate, she was still ready in the German War to swallow discreditable stories for which there was no foundation in fact. Although the Maharaja had never made any secret of his dissatisfaction with the policy of the Government of India *vis-à-vis* the Indian States, there is no single expression in letter or speech which implied anything but respect and reverence for the Royal House. He is by nature courteous to a degree, and in his own Durbars he expects his officers to observe the strict etiquette of Court ceremonial which includes the walking backwards for a few steps. He was, therefore, not ignorant that to turn his back upon the King-Emperor deliberately would be construed as a gross act of discourtesy. And even if the Maharaja had so far forgotten his own habits of profound courtesy, he was shrewd enough to know that the occasion of the Durbar was the very last for an inopportune exhibition of temper. As Viscount Hardinge, the Viceroy's brother, said a few days afterwards: 'If the Gaekwar really intended to do such a thing before 2,000 Europeans and 100,000 loyal 'Natives' he was a far bolder man than I believed him to

be'. In letter after letter in which he complains of the attitude of the Government of India towards the States, he betrays a certain nervousness by adding some qualifying phrase—'I write this only as a friend' or 'I do not wish to complain', or some such formula intended to imply that he does not wish to say anything which could give offence in official quarters. To those who know the Maharaja it is perfectly incredible that he should have been so foolish, so discourteous, and so false to his own Order as to have done the thing which was attributed to him.

So much for *a priori* reflections: now for the facts. When the Nizam of Hyderabad as the premier Prince had made his obeisance, it was the turn of the Maharaja of Baroda. The pavilion where the Princes were seated was a long way from the Throne, and the mere fact of walking so far under the gaze of hundreds of thousands was in itself an ordeal. The Maharaja approached, bowed to the King and not to the Queen and retreated. Here is his own account to a friend:

'I went up to the King, made my bow as I was told (to bow once only), and not seeing the exit, I stepped back and asked the officer on duty by what direction I had to go. I did as he told me, i.e. I had to turn to the right and proceed, which I did. . . . I had no earthly reason to insult His Majesty, which I should consider very wrong to do.' ¹

And again, writing to Mr. Elliot, he says:

'The only mistake I made was that I should have gone a few steps farther than I did before I turned my back. . . . Uncharitable people interpret the incident in their own way and think that it was something deliberate, an act which I should never dream of doing, not only to the King, but to anybody.' ²

Eye-witnesses bear out the story with just those differ-

¹ *Selected Letters*, vol. ii, No. 1072, p. 738, dated 15.11.1912.

² *Ibid.*, vol. ii, No. 979, p. 693, dated 12.1.1912.

ences which one would expect when impressions are formed of an act committed in the midst of a large and important assembly. A brother Prince lays the blame on Gold Stick in Waiting, probably the 'officer on duty' to whom the Maharaja refers. He thought that the Maharaja was taking the wrong turning, was put right, and inadvertently turned his back in correcting his mistake. A Political Officer, looking on from a distance, got the impression that the Maharaja in beginning to descend the high steps leading to the Throne turned round to see where he was going. A detail which neither noticed, and which has never been recorded, is that the Maharaja was actually struck in the back by the pole of the tent. As that does not usually happen to persons walking forward, what was more natural than to turn round to see what was in the way? If two witnesses could thus give accounts which differ from the Maharaja's own and can be reconciled, it is surely equally likely that certain others, on the watch for disloyalty, entirely misinterpreted the whole affair, and set England ablaze with their own versions and their own indiscretions. Those who still believe the version of *The Times* correspondent will not be convinced, but let it be said emphatically that no unbiased person reading the records of this unhappy affair from the inside, could, upon the evidence, possibly come to any other conclusion than that the mistake was altogether inadvertent, and that the Maharaja was perfectly right when he complained that the whole affair had been grossly exaggerated and entirely misunderstood.

V

The storm took the Maharaja by surprise. He was quite unaware that he had done anything wrong until a friend told him next day that people were talking, and that he had better explain to the Viceroy. Here is his letter

to Lord Lamington, who had been Governor of Bombay:

'I am sending you a few lines on the matter which has been troubling me lately. I know you will have read the unfavourable criticism of my views and conduct that has appeared in the Press lately. I hope I need not tell you that the statements made concerning me are gross exaggerations, perversions of fact, and in some cases quite ungrounded. I deeply deplore the breach of etiquette for which I was responsible at Delhi. It was, however, quite unintentional, and due to unforeseen nervousness and confusion which I do not think would have overtaken me if I had been in my usual health at the time. To attribute such an action to intent was absurd. I had already had more than one friendly and pleasant interview with His Majesty in which his personal courtesy and consideration impressed me deeply.'¹

And after alluding to the 'open circulation of many foolish rumours' and to the reports that he had 'countenanced sedition in my State', he went on:

'With your long experience you will realize how difficult it is for any one in my position to learn all the impressions which, rightly or wrongly, are formed about him. Hence in the present case these wholesale charges have taken me by surprise. Every one is liable to make occasional mistakes; but I think it is a matter of great regret that actions, trivial but possibly inexpedient, are not pointed out at the time, instead of being misinterpreted and made the basis of exaggerated and untrue rumours which may circulate for a long time without reaching my ears.'²

It was a relief to him thus to unburden his mind to his friends. He wrote, as he had been advised to do, to the Viceroy in the same strain, though, of course, in less familiar terms, explaining what actually occurred and assuring him of 'the reality of my loyalty and allegiance

¹ *Selected Letters*, vol. ii, No. 977, p. 691, dated 5.1.1912.

² *Ibid.*, vol. ii, No. 977, p. 692, dated 5.1.1912.

to the Throne and Person'. This was described in a portion of the British Press as an 'abject apology'. An explanation it certainly was, and an apology it may well be called, but the word 'abject' only reflects the intensity of feeling in that particular class of journal or in the public whose tastes it was bound to consider. The Viceroy published the letter with the Maharaja's consent, which was gladly given. But an official expression of regret, whether 'abject' or not, does not always carry conviction. The Maharaja is no exception to the rule that words and deeds may look very different when examined in the light of intimate correspondence. Here there was no such difference. The letter already quoted is only one of several, to friends in different walks of life, in which he never swerved from his position. He repeated the story, sometimes in almost the same words, sometimes briefly, sometimes at length, but always without deviation from, or qualifications of, his explanation to the Viceroy. If there be any value in written evidence, those who refuse to believe must be prepared to hold that the Maharaja was not only disloyal, but also untruthful.

It seems to have been further laid to his charge that he did not bow to the Queen. This was even sillier than the main charge, and it is only fair to say that nothing much was made of it. He says himself that he was 'told by the Resident to make one bow only, as the first few Princes were, I learn, asked to do—I am chivalrous enough to bow to a lady: and to make one bow only to the King did strike me'; but the ceremonial on such an occasion was very precise, and he did not dare to vary the terms of his instructions.

Passion has now subsided; in the perspective of years the Durbar incident should take its proper place as a triviality, magnified out of all proportion by the feeling of the moment. It pained the Maharaja to be thus

suspected of disrespect to the Sovereign, and the distorted version followed him for years. The irony of history has made it necessary to devote pages to what ought to have been dismissed in a few words, because one of the outstanding facts by which the Maharaja is known to the less instructed sections of the English public is the Durbar incident.



THE MAHARAJA AT MIDDLE AGE

Chapter Twelve

INTERNAL REFORMS

IT is a relief to turn from these unprofitable disputes to the very real and tangible progress which the State had made in the early years of the reign. Sir T. Madhav Rao had never pretended that his work was complete; he had contemplated roads but shrank from the expense; he had contemplated irrigation but was deterred by the lie of the country; he had deliberately refused to introduce codified laws, holding, probably wisely, that the State ought not to be dismayed by an inrush of unaccustomed legislation which could come when the time was ripe; he had made a beginning with railways in the hope that extensions would come with the years. Perhaps the reform of the Land Revenue system was that which pressed most urgently, for where the principal, indeed almost the only, industry was agriculture and the State claimed a share in the produce, the land tax was the mainstay of the administration. On it depended all the other benefits which subsequent years were to call into being. Without it all the schemes for the spread of education, for the improvement of communications, for the general welfare of the people must have perished. But it was equally obvious that a capricious, unequal, and ill-collected land tax was unjust to the State as it was unjust to the people.

In all the reforms which he introduced Sir T. Madhav Rao was inspired by the theories and the practice of the British Government. It was under their auspices that he had learned his work, and it was only natural that he should apply what he had learned to Baroda. The Maharaja followed the lead thus given. He copied, but he copied cautiously, and with discrimination. It is an injustice to him to represent his reforms, as has been done,

as though they were startling innovations invented by the brain of a superman. That would have been extreme rashness in any one, which would have deserved censure rather than praise. It would have been more than rashness in an autocratic youth under 25, who some thirteen years earlier could not even sign his name. The credit which is due to the Maharaja for these early reforms rests on other grounds. He had experienced and able advisers, and he had the wisdom to take their advice; he had before him and around him the practice of the British and he resolved to follow it; he had the vision to see what was really required, the energy to carry it out, the prudence to take full counsel before embarking on reform, and the caution not to be in too much of a hurry. In some of his enterprises he failed. The enthusiasm and the desire to see the prosperity of his State led him occasionally to disregard the psychological factors of his people, or at least to expect more than they have been able to accomplish. The tools with which he worked were not always of the best—and the best can make mistakes. But though there were failures, though money has been sunk in undertakings which have proved of little value either to the State or to the people, the bulk of his reforms brought the State rapidly forward.

But stability had to come before progress. The Maharaja lost little time in attacking the land question. There are many kinds of land-tenure in India. In Bengal Lord Cornwallis established the much discussed Permanent Settlement; in Oudh the land was held by great proprietors; elsewhere there was the 'Zamindari' system under which the Government looked for its revenue to comparatively few, whose sub-tenants the peasantry were; in Madras Sir Thomas Munro successfully introduced the ryotwari system, which was also the system of Bombay. Under this a regular field survey was held, the lands were

registered in the names of individual farmers, and a fair money tax was assessed upon them with due regard to soil, rainfall, prices, and other factors. It was not, and was not intended to be, permanent. The State was entitled to receive its fair share of increased income, to which indeed it contributed in various ways, such as by the extension of communications and the establishment of markets. The periodical revisions of the settlement were therefore made at comparatively long intervals, so that the people might remain in undisturbed security during that time, while the State would reap the benefits of progress at fixed intervals. And within these broader limits there were other varieties of tenure. Much land—sometimes whole villages—had been granted by previous Rulers on no better pretexts than that the recipients had recited poems in honour of the Raja or had offered prayers for his long life. It is asserted that in some cases prayers were still being said for Rajas long dead, since that was the service for which the land had been granted. Some villages were taxed collectively, the villagers themselves apportioning the tax according to their own ideas. Some villages paid cash rents, others rent in kind, involving the appointment of officers to look after the Government interests, and sometimes ending in chicanery and oppression. To certain classes called Girassias the Government of India gave guarantees for historical reasons having their roots in the conquest of Gujerat and Kathiawar by the Gaekwars, and in the subsequent overthrow of the Maratha empire by British arms.

II

Sir T. Madhav Rao of course adopted the system of Bombay, with which he had become familiar because of its neighbourhood to Baroda, and had made a beginning. The Maharaja took in hand the perfecting of what had

been thus begun. It was a very great task. The department had to be organized; men had to be trained who were quite unfamiliar with the work; those only could be employed who had knowledge of the customs and the language of the people. The people themselves, always ready to look with suspicion upon something new, might be expected to offer opposition, as indeed in some cases they did; and finally the Government of India, watching with a jealous, but at the same time sympathetic eye, the efforts of the young Ruler towards order and progress, had to be satisfied that the measures he was taking were really for the good of the people, and did not arbitrarily infringe their rights.

The policy now adopted was not entirely new. The able but volatile Maharaja Khande Rao had undertaken a survey on ryotwari lines but, unfortunately, the work was left half done, and what was done was done carelessly. What remained of the records of this survey would, it was hoped, serve as a basis for the more thorough inquiry now undertaken, but on examination it was found that it must be discarded altogether. The system, such as it was, was so carelessly administered that huge arrears mounted up, which for all the realization that was, or could be, attempted, existed only on paper. The actual cultivators were left more or less to the mercy of those who were in effect farmers of the revenue. It remained for Malhar Rao to introduce the farming system more openly, to improve upon it by giving the farms to a Court favourite whose sole idea was to collect what he could from the unfortunate ryots. The result was that he 'falsified his accounts, collected as much as he was able and paid into Government as little as he decently could'.¹ Whatever there had been of good in Khande Rao's reform was swept away by the folly of his successor.

¹ *Baroda Gazetteer*, vol. i, p. 13.

The Maharaja appointed his old tutor, Mr. F. A. H. Elliot, to be in charge of the newly created department and to carry out on ordered and scientific lines what Sir Madhav Rao had begun in more rough and ready fashion. The advantages of the system were obvious; its disadvantages were not so apparent. Mr. Elliot himself, though he introduced cash payments, had grave doubts of its justice when applied to the possessions in Kathiawar because of the variability of the seasons there. He earnestly recommended that there should be an assessment which varied from year to year, and though the advice was not taken, it was not lost on His Highness. In 1900 when he was making tours throughout the Raj to observe for himself the famine conditions then prevailing, he was struck by the petitions which he received from the Kaliparaj folk, the aborigines who inhabit the forest tracts of Navsari. In the 'Famine Notes' which he afterwards published he says :

'I am thinking of trying in these districts the "varying Bighoti" system, which is expected to combine the advantages of both the Bighoti [cash rents] and the Bhagbatai [shares in kind] systems. I never realized how crushing were the effects of the Bighoti or fixed assessment system till the present year of famine, and never did I receive more petitions and requests for saving the people from the burden of the Bighoti, whose incidence is every year the same, irrespective of the prospects of the season. . . . Under the old system the Government probably took more in good times ; but it also showed great generosity in the grant of remissions during hard times like these.' ¹

The burden on the land was aggravated by the addition of numerous miscellaneous taxes which had been largely imposed to satisfy the rapacity, not perhaps of the Rajas, but of the unworthy sycophants who infested the Court.

¹ *Notes on the Famine Tour*, by His Highness the Maharaja Gaekwar, p. 115.

A great many of these had been abolished, but the new department under the direction of the Maharaja set itself the task of abolishing more; and this was accordingly done to the great advantage of the ryots, and also of the development of trade. But the hardest task remained. If the prosperity of the cultivators had been placed upon a better footing by giving them security, the principle of equality of distribution demanded that those who had profited by the promiscuous generosity of former Rulers in return for merely nominal services or for none at all, should now be called upon to contribute something to the State revenues. There was, of course, strenuous opposition by vested interests, but the resolution of the Maharaja, supported by the tact and ability of Mr. Elliot and his department, overcame all obstacles. The Land question had at last been solved, and with the framing of rules which should deal with every conceivable kind of tenure this most important subject was closed. Henceforth the departments were only concerned to apply the rules to particular cases, and though there have been changes, the principles of the Land settlement remain intact.

It has just been said that there was strenuous opposition. This for the most part was expressed in remonstrance, petition, appeal. But in one noteworthy case it took the form of active rebellion. When the Survey Department began to measure the public lands in certain favoured villages, the leading Rajputs organized a regular league for resistance. They collected arms and money for the purpose. In the village of Pilwai, where active operations were going on, they attacked the officers of the Police, the Survey, and the Revenue Departments and drove them away. They fortified the village, prepared for a regular siege, and defied the authority of Government. At last, the Police having proved unavailing, the Military were called in. The Resident advised conciliation, and his

advice was followed as far as possible, but the Maharaja had his doubts whether a short and sharp lesson would not have been the wiser course. He had a sly dig at the policy which forbade the manufacture of ammunition in the State, for, he says, the officers and men have no faith in their arms, and the rebels are better armed. The troops were sent in batches, and there was delay, due not so much to the State officials as to the procedure prescribed in getting them to the scene of action. The Maharaja pours impartial scorn on the proceedings of the officers. They were not working together, and were not trying to find out the real state of affairs. Their courage was not conspicuous, for

‘they have from the beginning, as it seems now after the affair is over, overrated the extent and magnitude of the row and the number and bravery of the Rajputs. Heroic tales of Rajputs conveyed in the novels seem to have had some fair amount of effect on the minds of some of the military and other officers of Government.’¹

In the end some 2,000 troops were required. They stormed the village with the loss of five men injured. Thirteen of the rebels were killed, and the village itself was burnt accidentally. The affair is typical in India. There was no specific grievance. The suspicious nature of the people led them to suppose that something was contemplated to their hurt when the measuring of land began. Starting with this flimsy excuse, they were inflamed by the recital of past glories, and by wholly inaccurate versions given to them of what the Baroda Government could, or could not, do without the permission of the British. Like many another such episode, this small affair was magnified partly by inflamed sentiment and partly by the dilatory and hesitating action of the authorities.

¹ *Selected Letters*, vol. i, No. 357, p. 274, dated 20.6.1898.

III

For many years the separation of the Judicial from the Executive functions was a plank in the Congress platform. Under the British Indian system the District Officers have many duties to perform, not the least among them being the administration of Criminal Justice. The arguments both in favour of, and against this system, have to some extent been theoretical. It was urged in defence of the plan that to deprive officers of their magisterial powers would result in a deplorable loss of prestige; while those who condemned it insisted that the officer who locally represented the Crown ought not to be judge and prosecutor in one. It cannot honestly be said that either theory has been adequately put to the test. The prestige of the officers has not been threatened because the change has not been tried; nor can the opponents of the system fairly claim that the combination of the two functions in the same man has ever actually prejudiced the administration of Criminal Justice. The more practical arguments were, on the one side, that the revenue officer would have more time to look after affairs which provided enough work for one man; and on the other, that the appointment of many new Magistrates would involve a wholly disproportionate burden on the exchequer.

The two main arguments which had been advanced against the system appeared to the Maharaja to be sound. The special organization of Baroda State threw a great deal of revenue work upon one man, and there was no fear that if magisterial powers were taken away he would not find enough to do. The very argument of prestige, on which the upholders of things as they were relied, was turned against them, for His Highness thought that the executive officers should not lie under the suspicion that they depended upon their magisterial powers for their

revenue work. He determined, therefore, to introduce the system cautiously. A few special Courts were opened, and the results seemed to justify extension. The people could get justice closer at hand, and with less expense and delay. They were not obliged to follow the Magistrate round into the various places where his revenue duties took him, and they could rely on getting better legal help if their cases were always to be tried at headquarters.

In 1894 sufficient experience had been gained of the new system to justify a further departure. Acting in consultation with Mr. Naylor of the Bombay Civil Service, who had been appointed Special Judicial Commissioner, the Maharaja decided to abolish the special Magistrates and to transfer the criminal work to the Civil Judges. There were, however, certain places in the Raj which neither justified the establishment of a separate Court nor warranted the waste of time involved by making other Magistrates travel there for the sake of a few cases. The experiment was tried and was soon given up. In no place, however, were the Revenue officers entirely relieved of their magisterial functions. Various miscellaneous duties were assigned to them, chief among them being: (i) the trial of cases against persons of bad character with a view to taking security, and (ii) arrangements for the prevention of a breach of the peace. True to his policy of training officers to be useful in more than one capacity, the Maharaja has further directed that a certain number of cases should be sent for trial by young and promising officers.

This measure has undoubted claims to be counted among the Maharaja's reforms. Not only is Criminal Justice made easier and cheaper, but it is an advantage that the Judge should be a man with a legal training and used to the ways of Courts. Too often the younger Magistrates in British India are merely promoted clerks

whose only claim to any knowledge of the law is based upon the passing of a departmental examination. Nor is it certain that the system has thrown any serious extra burden upon the exchequer. With the advance of the years and the progress of the people, administration has become more complicated; new departments have been created and new wants have to be supplied. It is possible that, if the criminal work had not thus been transferred to them, the number of Civil Judges might be reduced, but this reduction would be counterbalanced by the necessity of creating new Revenue posts. It certainly does not appear that the District Magistrates, whose functions have thus been curtailed but who still retain important powers, have lost anything in prestige, nor can it be said with any pretension to accuracy, that they have gained more fully the confidence of the people by reason of this divorce from their executive duties. These arguments were, and still remain, academic. The true justification for the measure lies in the more efficient administration of justice; that claim, though it is somewhat exaggerated, may be allowed.

IV

But, apart from specific instances, the reforming zeal of the Maharaja was best seen in that philosophy of administration, by which he endeavoured to instil his principles of good government into, and to stimulate the energy of, the subordinates with whom he has to work. For many years it has been the practice of the Maharaja to give free play to his ideas in his orders, and to hang a series of precepts on the disposal of some trivial matter. The question of continuing an allowance to some privileged person leads him to discuss the dignity of labour, and the need for every man to contribute to the well-being of the world; formal sanction to a revised estimate stirs in him

reflections on finance and method. The orders do not belong to any particular period, they cover practically the whole reign. Taken together they form a manual of government which might be called the modern counterpart of the famous Arthasastra of Kautilya, Chandragupta's Minister.

One of his first cares was the reorganization of the Court. There was an enormous amount of waste. Early traditions had about them the glamour of Eastern ideas of magnificence. An army of servants and a profusion of charities were symbols of the royal rank. The moment he left the Palace all sorts of followers collected to attend to his slightest want, and to embarrass him with officious services. If he wanted a glass of water, search had first to be made for the proper person to perform that office. Pharaoh's baker might perhaps produce butter in a lordly dish, but Pharaoh's cup-bearer alone was privileged to hand the water.

But even Maharajas cannot always do as they like. The prejudices of his own people had to be overcome, and it took time to persuade them that an army of servants was not practical politics from the point of view either of expense or of comfort. Very gradually the staff was reduced from 200 to 40, and of the number of attendants in Europe the Maharaja has knocked off the odd 50 from the original figure of 55. He recalled these earlier experiences in Europe in an entertaining speech, already quoted, which he made at the Club, founded by himself for the recreation of his officers, where he sometimes goes as an honoured guest:

'Then there arose the question of my trip to Europe. I was myself in those days very ignorant and my people were more so. No one knew how many followers I ought to take with me, no one told me a large number was unnecessary. You will laugh now in the light of the greater knowledge which the years have

brought us at the thought of the size of the retinue which accompanied us on our first visit to the West. We took with us fifty-five persons including a tailor to look after our clothes, and a priest to guard our spiritual welfare. Unfortunately the latter found the customs of the West so much to his liking that certain habits he developed became a source of inconvenience to me.' ¹

Although he was early impressed by the unmethodical extravagance of the Palace, the comparative simplicity of Europe, and the inconvenience of an unwieldy retinue when on foreign travel seem to have impelled him to further economies. To Pestonji, the head of the Household, known technically as the Khangi Karbhari, he wrote in 1893 from Vienna :

'The Swari expenses are increasing very rapidly and therefore please remember we cannot be too careful in reducing them by various means. First let the Swaris be undertaken when really required for health ; and secondly have as few followers in the Swari as possible. A small number of attendants who are well trained give greater pleasure to their master and to themselves, than a large number which mostly must consist of useless idle men.' ²

The Maharaja has his own ideas of dignity, and he has laid down in orders his conceptions of what the Court should be. The establishment is to be what is actually required to answer its purpose, and maintain the dignity of the State. Pomp and show in due proportion are not only useful but essential for prestige and for the public good. The Household Department was directed to collect evidence of the social customs and etiquette to be observed by the Royal Family, and to see that they are followed; for time-honoured customs and manners ought not to be abruptly abolished without careful considera-

¹ *Speeches and Addresses*, vol. ii, p. 371.

² *Selected Letters*, vol. i, No. 129, p. 93, dated 30.5.1893.

tion of their meaning and use. And in tours outside Baroda the camps must be arranged in consonance with the dignity of His Highness and the glory of the State. Money reasonably spent in this behalf was not wasted, but extravagance was to be avoided at all costs.

There were indeed times when the people's love of pomp and circumstance had to be gratified, and when the money was 'reasonably spent' in great display. Sentiment demanded it. Here is the description by an eye-witness in 1910 of a great procession on the occasion of the Id festival on the last day of the Mahomedan fast of Ramzan :

'An advance guard of Cavalry was followed by a troop of brilliantly dressed Sardars also mounted on horse-back, and then one after another the lordly elephants came majestically. They all had their faces and trunks painted with an elaborate design of blue and yellow, carried gold and silver ornaments, and were hung with long gold-embroideries, their riders sitting in howdahs of every conceivable shape. As they arrived they drew up on either side of the gate-way of the mosque, and then, advancing slowly through the imposing body-guard, came the Maharaja. . . . He was magnificently dressed, a great plume of diamonds waving above his puggari, a splendid collar of pearls and diamonds hanging round his neck, the Star of India blazing with jewels on his breast and priceless rings flashing on his hands as with one he returned the salutes of his subjects and with the other grasped the jewelled sword hilt. He was mounted on an enormous elephant decorated with a massive gold necklace, gold cases for his tusks, gold anklets, and earrings—an elephant's ear-ring being the size of a breast plate—and golden bells. From his back to the ground hung a wonderful piece of cloth of gold, the size of a large drawing-room carpet.'¹

Here was the Maharaja in all his glory, but—in these later days at any rate—the splendour of apparel is not much to his liking. In the latest of these processional

¹ *A Year with the Gaekwar*, by Weedon, p. 155.

ceremonies, the marriage of Prince Pratap Singh, heir to the throne of Baroda, the Maharaja walked, according to custom, from his own Palace to the Nazarbag Palace at the other end of the town, which is the appointed place for such ceremonies. He had changed nothing except that he wore a black velvet coat instead of the ordinary silk one. He wore the same simple dress at the banquet which followed, and incidentally made by far the best speech of the evening—a speech of his own choosing and delivered without hesitation, and, as far as one could see, without notes.

The Court of the Maharaja is now marked by an essential simplicity which contrasts strongly with the usual ideas of oriental magnificence. There is a restrained elegance about the Palace which appeals to European taste. The servants—no more of them than are necessary—are always neat, clean, and well-mannered; slovenliness the Maharaja cannot bear and will not tolerate. At the Durbars (or Levees), at which all the nobles, officers of State, and other privileged persons are expected to be present, every one wears the prescribed dress, and the officers of the army are resplendent in green and gold. The proceedings open with the performance by the Palace dancing girls, shrill of voice and rather stout of figure, but if you substitute for them the European band, and for the many coloured head-dresses the sombre uniform of civilians, and the gayer ones of soldiers, there is little to distinguish the assembly from that at a similar function in Europe. An usher with a melancholy voice proclaims the approach of the Maharaja, who passes to the throne, acknowledging on the way the salutes of the company. On the greater occasions the younger Princes appear in brilliant suits of silk, adorned with costly jewels, but the Maharaja seldom wears anything but an ordinary silk suit and the traditional Maratha hat. The birthday

Durbar in March to which the Resident and the British officers come, is the principal among the regular ceremonies of the year, and the Maharaja may then wear the sash of the Star of India as well as the diamond ornaments of his own Orders. That is usually as far as he will go in decoration.

The long procession begins. Each in turn salutes His Highness and retires a few steps backwards and so to his seat. At the close it is the privilege of the Dewan, as the head of the administration, to present the customary offerings of flowers and betel to the Maharaja first, and then to the Princes, after which bouquets are distributed in accordance with the graceful Indian custom, the Maharaja retires, and the company disperses. His Highness sets no great store by these ceremonies but, as he said once, they maintain an old custom and they serve to keep manners polished.

Private audiences are arranged by special request to the aide-de-camp in waiting, but many officers seem to attend the Palace on the chance of an interview. No particular ceremony is observed beyond announcing the arrivals to the Maharaja, who takes his own time to receive them. He may be at his desk in his usual garb, or, in the cold weather, he is often to be found in the garden wearing a European suit and a Homburg hat. His ministers he will sometimes receive in an undress of white linen; and even when ill in bed he is not inaccessible to those whom he cares to see. The Maharani does not join in these receptions of visitors. She has her own apartments in the Palace and prefers to keep to them, gathering round her a chosen circle in the afternoon to play tennis. The days of her purdah are long past, and she likes to have small luncheon parties to which are invited a few guests of either sex. One suspects that both husband and wife enjoy these small informal parties far

more than the ceremonial feasts to which numbers are invited *honoris causa*. The Maharaja says to Lord Reay:

‘One can go on working for a couple of hours more if necessary than usual, but an hour of visitors is most tiring, specially when the visits are stiffly ceremonial.’¹

On tour the same simplicity is observed. The Maharaja drives in a car with the Dewan or a Minister in attendance, and in the village crowds of all kinds—touchable or untouchable—throng round him with their simple petitions. At some district ceremony, such as the opening of Water-works, or of a new line of railway, the Maharaja uses a little more formality, not for personal aggrandizement, but because it is right that the people should see him attended by the kind of circumstance which they expect from him. On such occasions he dispenses with a military escort and contents himself, if he has any, with a few mounted police to see that all is clear. The car is driven at a foot’s pace through the serried ranks of eager, but not very demonstrative, crowds, and a Durbar is held. Here is illustrated that happy blend of East and West in the gap between which the Maharaja claims to stand. The motor-car unescorted or barely escorted is familiar to Londoners when the King drives out to some ceremony of secondary importance; the Durbar represents that maintenance of old custom, suited to race and country, to which His Highness attaches importance, so long as it has good reason behind it.

V

The Maharaja has limited the Privy Purse to a percentage of the revenue, but with all that, and in spite of serious financial losses, he is a very rich man. The Khangi or Household Department is therefore of considerable importance, and has been organized as carefully as any other

¹ *Selected Letters*, vol. i, No. 23, p. 17, dated 22.11.1886.

department of the State. In the old days previous Rajas spent what they liked on themselves, or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that they flung away money on any object of their fancy—on courtesans, on palaces, on jewels, or at the bidding of the Brahmans on charities, without counting the cost, and upon such an imperfect system of accounting when there was any at all, that chaos and confusion were the only results. The Maharaja did not stop at personal economies. Wherever there was extravagant waste, retrenchment was ordered. On one occasion when his aunt, the widow of a former Gaekwar Prince, proposed to go to the provincial town of Navsari, merely for change of air, she seems to have wished to take an enormous retinue, for the Maharaja suggested a modest staff of 75 to 100. If that was not enough, he remarked significantly if a trifle truculently, she had better stay in Baroda as she had hitherto done. What even 75 persons in attendance upon a single widowed lady could possibly find to do passes the European understanding. Apparently the Maharaja, who has so severely confined himself to a very few servants, dared not at the time go further than this. Oriental traditions of princely rank demanded a regular army, to the enormous inconvenience of the grandee concerned, of those whom he visited, and of the servants themselves. What the original number was does not appear.

From incidents such as this may be gathered the strength of vested interests which the Maharaja set himself to destroy. Indiscriminate charity lavished on purposes supposed to be religious, but really quite undeserving, especially moved his wrath. The grasping character in one of Chaucer's coarsest, but most amusing, tales was not more ingenious in his efforts to extract money from his victims than was many a Brahman priest who throve on the credulous devotion of the people. Temples

absorbed huge sums of money contributed by the pious, among whom the royal ladies were conspicuous. More lakhs were consumed by the so-called charities of the Palace, and the piety of the ladies not only opposed retrenchment but tended to swell the expenses. The Maharaja made no secret of his intense dislike of parasites :

‘The charities we give according to the tenets of our religion should necessarily be discriminate and fully deserved by the recipients. The apparent reason why alms-giving has grown into an institution with us is that a number of our dependants have come to live on it alone. It has to be said that the ceremonies and penances that are being introduced into the Palace in an undue proportion are mere superstitions preached by ignorant self-seekers, who by the bye should better receive fixed pay each month than live and grow fat on the unending charities.’¹

But vested interests do not succumb without a struggle. Reforms had to be cautiously introduced for fear of giving offence to the people who regarded these charities as an obligation on the Ruler, and a necessary discharge of religious duties. If for this cause immediate retrenchment could not be made, at least no new items were to be added. Wherever reductions had been ordered they were to remain; stupid extravagance was not to be tolerated even on the plea of restoring things to their old level. The policy of control over unrestrained expenditure was strongly resented by everybody, and not least by the professional Brahmans, who may fitly be described in Miltonic phrase as ‘blind mouths’, since their main profession was to batten on the royal hospitality on the strength of their caste. The Maharaja felt his way but did not yield. The Brahmans, furious at the reduction of

¹ H.O. (Joshi). Most of the quotations in this chapter are taken from a mass Compendium of Huzur Orders dealing with various subjects and without dates.

their dole, appealed to the Resident. The Maharaja scornfully remarked that that was not the way for recipients of charity to show gratitude; if the dole was to be forced upon him by the Residency it was no longer a charity but an exaction.

VI

Difficult as was the task of retrenchment, no less difficult was the task of improving the morale of the services, on which ultimately the success of an administration must depend. The Maharaja was unsparing in his criticism. He had undertaken the Herculean task of revising the old system, and instead of help and encouragement he had encountered only passive resistance. The people were not in the least prepared for a change; their philosophy was that whatever is is best. Loyalty of the purest type—by which is meant the subordination of self to duty—was very rare, and every one was guided by self-interest; one result of this curious conception of duty was that supervision was lax. The officers shrank from accepting responsibility; they would not be strict because they could not face unpopularity.

He tried to spur his officers with his own enthusiasm. The interests of the State, the Ruler, and the ruled being identical, the secret of good government lay in the combined efforts and the willing co-operation of every one. 'The high purpose of the labours of the Maharaja will be fulfilled only if his administrative officers assist him with an eagerness equal to his own.' He felt that he was ploughing a lonely furrow. Men who were able and willing to prosecute eagerly their claims for advancement or negotiations for a government loan were, when there was government work to be done, seized with a timely attack of gout or a disabling headache. Many years later he referred to this habit of shirking in more humorous

strain. In the same speech already quoted, to the Sayaji Vihar Club for officers, he said, referring to his earlier European travels :

‘Our officers and Mankaris, when asked, all declare their willingness to die if need be for the Huzur [i.e. the Maharaja]. As our proverb puts it, “Wherever you spit, there will our blood lie”. But somehow or other mysterious ailments began to exhibit themselves amongst them or their families : the wives of some were stricken with rheumatism, the fathers, mothers or sisters of others were too ill to be left, and the situation was the reverse of simple. We turned to our relatives. They were unwilling but from affection they would accompany us.’¹

Surely Everyman seeking for friends on his last journey, and repulsed with the excuse that ‘By Saint Anne, I have a pain in my toe’, was in hardly worse predicament than the autocratic ruler of Baroda.

There was too a deplorable lack of method. It is an amiable weakness of Indians to be whole-heartedly enthusiastic in any given cause, but since their mental equipment is not adapted to detailed examination or to the forecasting of possible contingencies, enthusiasm is apt to flag, and the task undertaken to come to nothing or to end in disaster. A people infinitely patient in the execution of what promises an immediate result has not the patience to think out details, to consider the ways and means, or to wait for long-deferred returns. It was some such quality as this which prompted the Maharaja to complain that ‘the Indian people are generally not inclined to work systematically, and at the present stage they have much to learn in respect of proper and proportionate division of work and responsibility and the importance of the value of time’. If a piece of work were given to a contractor, he complains by way of illustration, and alterations were made during execution, no care was taken

¹ *Speeches and Addresses*, vol. ii, p. 371.

to see that the cost and the terms were fixed beforehand, whereby many disputes arose. In after years, a comic instance occurred during one of the many trips to Europe. The Maharaja had fallen ill and two nurses—French and English—were engaged. The French woman proved unsatisfactory and was dismissed, but as no terms had been made, she flew into a passion and demanded in voluble French an extortionate fee. The chronicle remarks ruefully that ‘we ought to have made terms beforehand’, and notes the omission for future guidance.

Want of method never fails to exasperate His Highness, and a large part of his time has been, and is, devoted to improving the machinery of his State. He was especially anxious to inculcate a sense of proportion which seemed to be lacking. It was not for the Maharaja to attend to petty details; each had his allotted work, and it was waste of energy for a higher officer to do the work of a lower. From the Maharaja and his Government, whose business it was to initiate and to sanction large schemes, down to the lowly clerk engaged in preparing bills or registering papers, each part of the machine should contribute to the smooth working of the whole. It was intolerable that petitions should come direct to him or by backstairs influence; it was disgraceful to the State that it did not register and treasure up the records of past experience; and in many other places time and energy could be saved to the advantage of the State, and not seldom of its exchequer.

But with all his trenchant criticism, he was willing to admit that there was much that was good in his State. Almost as though he felt he had gone too far, and that his admonitions would only cause despondency, if not despair, he confesses in half-apologetic strain that his ‘reprimands . . . are not due to his conviction that nothing is right in our method of work’, but to an idealistic

aiming at perfection. He tried to carry his officers with him in appealing to them to strive with himself for the uplift of their country, regardless of public applause; their reward would come in time in the recognition and gratitude of the people.

Many of these admonitions will seem platitudes to those accustomed to an ordered system of government. The nations of western Europe would hardly need to be told that devotion to duty was one of the first qualities of a public servant, or that there is economy of time in methodical work. They were not platitudes among a people whose standard of duty was to avoid the displeasure of the Ruler at the least possible inconvenience to themselves, who had not learned the value of time, and were therefore unable to appreciate the truth of the saying that time is money. The Maharaja complained of the low standard of public morality which he found. Even so elementary a matter as the inviolability of confidential orders had not been grasped; and discipline was gravely menaced by a tendency to request a reconsideration of superior orders by those whose advice had not been taken. These things in spite of exhortations and warnings have persisted. The inherent tendencies of human nature are not easily overcome by words, even when they proceed from an autocratic mouth. Glad as the Maharaja would have been to delegate more power to his officers, he did not feel sufficient confidence to proceed very far in the direction of decentralization. It is a tendency which would seem to be universal. The extraordinary industry of Lord Curzon, which was the admiration of his colleagues and the despair of his imitators, sprang from the old trite saying that if you want a thing done well you should do it yourself. It was this conviction that made him re-write the Resolution on Land Revenue, supervise the minutest details of the great

Durbar, and regret that he had not packed his clothes himself when a shirt had gone astray.¹

Like Lord Curzon, the Maharaja will be content with nothing less than perfection, and perfection is, according to the law of human nature, what appears to be perfection to the controlling individual. Thus it was that, as has been said of Lord Curzon, he laid down his own plan of action, and it was that which he eventually carried out. The Maharaja repeatedly complains in his orders that his officers are lacking in initiative; he protests—quite fairly—that he is eminently reasonable, that he is willing to consider original suggestions, and that his officers must not be discouraged if they are not always accepted; but he also declares that almost all reforms in the State which have proved to be of any value came from himself.

So it was that the Resident complained that when the Maharaja went to Europe it was impossible to carry on the administration as long as everything had to be referred to the Maharaja. That was hyperbole, as the Maharaja had no difficulty in showing. Powers, very considerable powers, were delegated to his Council, but since Baroda, though it had an excellent organization had no constitution, not only might any of these powers be withdrawn at any moment, but any detail might be settled off-hand in contravention of the Council's orders, or the '*longa et grandis epistola*' might arrive from the Maharaja's Capreae which entirely altered the direction of policy. This latter did not in fact happen; there is no single instance of the Maharaja issuing a *firman* on an important subject without consulting his Ministers, and though, as in the case of the protest against the Curzon Circular, he acted against their advice, the very caution which is so characteristic of him ensured that he would take no step without the most careful consideration. But there were

¹ Ronaldshay, *Lord Curzon*, vol. ii, p. 178.

many details which he might well have left to others. It is one of his principles of government that his officers shall be so trained as to be useful in any branch of the service which is not too highly technical. And in pursuance of this policy a man may find himself the head of the Revenue, the Police Commissioner, and the Chief Justice in the course of two or three years. Situated as Baroda is, there is something to be said for this conception; it is the very antithesis of the modern idea of high specialization in a single branch, but where the services are limited it is at least open to argument that it is wiser to make use of the best men in as many ways as possible. At the same time no man can know everything, and when men are shifted in order that they may learn something of some new work, the persons stand to gain at the expense of continuity of administration.

The Maharaja likes to have it so, and the point has been mentioned not because it is in itself of great importance, but rather as an illustration of that close attention to detail which is at the same time a strength and a weakness. It should not be necessary for the head of any Government to busy himself with matters which can as well be done by others; still less is it necessary in the case of the Maharaja, who keeps himself well informed of what is going on in the State by means of a system of letters from the Dewan, the members of Government, and the heads of Departments. Nor is the Maharaja unaware that his time is often occupied with petty detail. 'The Ruler's time and energies need not be wasted on ordinary routine. He should have sufficient leisure to supervise the working of the Departments.' Such absurd routine matters as sanction for a door-handle or a mat have long passed out of the Ruler's hands, but it is still true that much of the time and energy of himself and his Government are wasted over routine matters. His ideal is so to free himself and

his Ministers that they can carry out important work, and devote more time and thought to large principles and large policies. He had 'adopted a principle of decentralisation', but the weakness of his subordinate staff, particularly in the lower ranks, has made him hesitate to press his principles to their logical conclusion. This centralizing of power in his own hands has undoubtedly told on his health, and has proved to be false economy. As early as 1909 his late Dewan, Mr. Kersaspji, wrote to him in an almost affectionate strain, but with the outspokenness of a true friend:

'Please take care of your health. You promise often to do so but as a matter of fact it is neglected. Please don't deceive yourself and in this respect exercise self-control, put forth an effort of the will, and pay the fullest attention to it. Health is required not only in your own interests but in those of your family and what you love best, your Raj, your people. It is no use forming a new system and improving it. The stability should be secured, and until you have done that both health and life are needed: May God grant you both! There is every possibility of your getting them, but don't spoil your own chances by neglecting health. It is what we all—your servants and your subjects and your friends—wish Your Highness to do. Could you firmly resolve to do it?

'But this health depends not only upon how much work you do but also upon the manner in which it is done. Both leave something to be desired. The work is too much: the manner is somewhat faulty. Could you not withdraw from small matters, small details? There are a great many things which are not worth Your Highness's doing nor worth your inquiring about or keeping yourself informed about. Please don't be yourself a judge in this matter. Let others advise you herein and follow their advice, and you have servants who can give you the best advice. And now that you have got officers after your own heart in the higher posts, persons in whom you feel confidence and for whom, I can notice, you cherish a high

regard, please leave administration to them and restrict the scope of your interference.' ¹

He goes on to point out that little mistakes here and there, small irregularities now and again, cannot dislocate the machinery which has been so well and truly established. Let the Maharaja have faith in it, and faith in his servants; let him lay down the lines of policy and declare his ideals and aspirations. And he concludes:

'Methods should not be the objects of your care generally. Yours is a higher sphere. Hold forth the objects : your servants must find the means.'

It was the voice of one crying in the wilderness. The old passion for work, the old passion for detail was too strong then to be exorcised; it still persists and preys upon the Maharaja's health. As the Latin tag puts it:

'Naturam expellas furca : tamen usque recurret.'

VII

As we have seen, Sir T. Madhav Rao had purposely omitted from his programme the codification of laws in Baroda State. Soon after his accession the Maharaja decided that public opinion was far enough advanced, and the disturbance of the public mind had sufficiently settled down to warrant the introduction of this great reform. Whatever difference His Highness may have had in the political relations of the Government of India with the States, and howsoever strong may have been his dislike of its policy in that regard, he was always ready to avail himself of their greater experience, and to acknowledge frankly what was acknowledged even by Germany at the time of greatest tension between the two nations, the genius of the British people for the art of Government. It was to his thinking both absurd and superfluous for the Govern-

¹ Unpublished letters.

ment of a small State to waste its time and energy in devising for itself laws and regulations when there were models to its hand, the work of better brains than Baroda could command, which could be incorporated wholesale into the Baroda system. The British officers were keen men of business, and what they thought was necessary for the Government of British India could not safely be neglected without careful examination. But the very ease of such a procedure was a snare. It was a short cut to legislation which, while it saved time, might also prove an excuse for laziness. It could always be plausibly urged that since the British had passed this or that law, it should be adopted in the State, without pausing to consider whether it suited State conditions or was really necessary. A warning against too facile methods was clearly required, and accordingly the Maharaja pointed out that what was good for a large State was not necessarily good for a small one, and that the British Government, though generally wise in its legislation, was nevertheless not infallible.

The British Government in India is a foreign Government, and there are many things which it cannot or dare not touch lest they should offend a susceptible temperament. The classic case of the kind is the abolition of Sati (or self-immolation by the widow), which had been discussed for years before Lord William Bentinck's Government plucked up courage to declare it illegal. In social matters the Government of India has always been nervous to interfere with existing custom, particularly when that custom could be shown, or could be supposed, to rest upon religious sanction.¹ An Indian State under an Indian ruler was in this respect in a stronger position, for

¹ It was left to an Indian Member, though the measure had the warm sympathy of the Government, to introduce the Sarda Bill, designed to check early marriages.

it could, without incurring the suspicion of an attempt to violate religion by the superior power of the ruling race, venture upon reforms which the Government of India could not even consider. Nevertheless, it was of little use to enact laws which were clearly opposed to the cherished customs of the people; little as public opinion might be developed, there was in the people a potentiality for passive resistance which could always make legislation ineffective. When, therefore, such legislation was undertaken, it was necessary to ensure that it would satisfy one of two conditions: either it must lead the people by endeavouring to persuade them of the evil of their ways, or it must follow the people by ministering to an expressed desire. In such circumstances the administration of such laws became a delicate matter. We can hardly be surprised if the philosophy of Government which thus came to them in the form of disconnected orders, seemed to the executive officers of Government at times bewildering and inconsistent. If, on the one hand, they were told to enforce the social laws in such a way as 'to impress the salutary effects of obeying these laws upon the minds of the people', without being in any way oppressive, on the other, they were warned that 'laws and rules often fail because they are not carried out with just severity'.

There was, of course, no real inconsistency. The injunction to be mild applied only to social legislation; the injunction to be severe was of more general application. But one seems to detect in these orders signs of violent oscillations in the State from one extreme to the other. The inference may, however, be unjust, for it will be remembered that these general reflections arose out of particular cases; they were to be interpreted in a rational manner as an expression of the general policy of the Ruler, and were not intended to supplant the exercise of a reason-

able discretion. It is one of the disadvantages of autocratic rule that every order of the Ruler is implicitly obeyed, and that with each apparent change of fancy on the part of the autocrat, executive action is apt to vary. The Maharaja has himself admitted that he may occasionally issue contradictory orders, having forgotten for the moment what he had already said, and he has laid stress—with perfect justice—on his readiness to correct mistakes. Nevertheless, the expression of the experience of a lifetime, devoted almost wholly to the art of administration, is remarkably free from inconsistency, and the student of political wisdom would find it hard to discover in the Maharaja's philosophy one single point which does not conform to the highest standards of the West.

No one realized better than His Highness that however excellent these maxims appeared on paper the execution of them was very far from perfect. He had warned his people of the danger of slavish imitation; he had exhorted them to examine a measure in the light of its merits, whether it had been adopted elsewhere or not. But he could not always prevent his officers from falling into the snare. On one occasion he had proposed certain changes in the rules relating to allowances, and his proposals evoked opposition from his Ministers; later on, when the British Government had ordered the same changes, those same Ministers were the first to recommend them. The multiplication of rules and regulations, dealing not only with every conceivable aspect of administration, but also with every conceivable detail of those aspects, has tended to destroy initiative, to hamper discretion, and to reduce the conduct of affairs to the exact compliance with the letter of a rule. 'I cannot find it in the bond' is the too frequent excuse. The Maharaja ruefully exclaimed that things went better in the days when there were not so many rules.

A stranger reading these orders reduced to the form of a kind of essay on Government might get the impression that the Maharaja has been badly served. That impression would be absolutely false. His Highness has been on the whole very well served, but his desire—a very natural desire—to perfect the work of his life, impels him to warn, to exhort, to point out what is wrong, to suggest remedies for the future. The reputation for good government which Baroda has enjoyed during many a long year is a subject of legitimate pride not only to the Maharaja but to all his officers. A gardener cannot work without tools, an architect cannot build without bricks. If it is to His Highness's credit that he has led Baroda for fifty years along the right path, it is to the credit of his officers that they have responded so generously to his inspiration. The Maharaja is feared because he is an exacting and severe master; in times of irritation, if the truth be told, apt to be capricious; but the Maharaja is also loved because he is kind and considerate, and because his people know that he has worked for them throughout his long reign. The love transcends the fear. His officers have carried out his orders to the best of their ability, not grudgingly because they are orders, but loyally and heartily because they are good orders. In moments of depression His Highness may have felt that he is a lonely man slaving for the good of his people in an atmosphere of indifference and incompetence, but when the clouds have disappeared, and his better self has reasserted itself, he knows that it is not so. Black sheep there are in the flock, and black sheep in such flocks there always will be. Many an officer—not excepting the highest—has done many a foolish thing; the administration is not perfect, and never will be since a realized ideal ceases to be an ideal. It would be easy, if it were not ungenerous, to point to defects, defects of detail, defects of execution, defects of outlook, defects even of

organization, since we do not all think alike. Great as have been the Maharaja's achievements, lofty as are his ideals, that which most redounds to his credit is that he has been able to surmount obstacles, to carry his people along with him, and to instil into his officers that loyalty and affection which grow ever more and more into the perfect co-operation on which he has set his heart.

Thus there has grown up in Baroda a large body of codified law accompanied by a still larger set of rules and regulations. There is no attempt to conceal the fact that a considerable part of this legislation has been copied, and even incorporated, direct, from British India. As developments take place there, they are closely watched in Baroda; new provisions are carefully examined by the special machinery set up for the purpose of drafting laws and of giving legal advice to the Government. As new activities are started in British India, they are watched in Baroda, and, if need be, adopted with such legislation as may be necessary. One curious point remains to be mentioned. The question often arises in India what language shall be used in the official correspondence and adopted as the official tongue. The Maharaja was at first inclined to prescribe Gujarati, which is the language of nine-tenths of the State, on the ground that a man can best express himself in his mother tongue. An exception was to be made in favour of those departments which were mainly manned by Marathas and might therefore use Marathi. But English was to be discouraged. This, however, had one particular disadvantage in that the higher officers of the Government, and especially the Dewans, were frequently recruited from outside, and while they were perfectly familiar with English, they knew nothing of Gujarati. The practice has now been changed, and the pendulum has swung in the other direction. English is to be used as far as possible, and it is to be remarked in

passing that His Highness when replying even to a vernacular address prefers to use English, though some of his audience may not understand him. The laws too, even those adopted *en bloc* from British India, are translated into the vernacular—from which they have in a few cases been re-translated into English instead of using the original version! To an Englishman the change is naturally welcome, and it is perhaps less of an inconvenience to the native Indian than might appear, since the ease with which an orator speaking in Gujarati will suddenly fall into and continue in English cannot but move the admiration of the listener. Many of the lower subordinate staff, however, do not know English, and even graduates planted out in the districts have forgotten it for want of practice, so that the bulk of the correspondence is still carried on in Gujarati.

VIII

Another stone was placed on the edifice of reconstruction when the system of finance was overhauled. Shortly after he assumed charge the Maharaja ordered that each department should prepare its own annual budget. Incredible as it may seem, there were apparently no regular forecasts of expenditure, with the result that money was paid out in a haphazard fashion as it was wanted, and there was no definite programme. The new system was unfamiliar, and at first was not worked with any care or precision. Works for which budget provision was made were put off with a characteristic procrastination until the choice had to be made between stampeding the work and surrendering the allotment. Some departments were, however, so little acquainted with budgets that they were aggrieved at finding that they could not take credit for unexpended amounts, but must surrender them to the exchequer and ask for reallocation under the new budget.

To ensure the stability of the State the Maharaja further established a State Reserve, which he placed at three times the annual revenue, though he regarded four years' revenue as the ideal. The recognized financial method is, of course, to issue a loan upon the open market, but the Maharaja found to his chagrin that 'raising loans in foreign countries was most injurious to the prestige and credit of an Indian State'. This was no slur upon Baroda. Where everything depends upon the idiosyncrasies of one man, investors are likely to be shy, and even though the particular despot might be of the benevolent type with rational ideas of the value of State money, there was no guarantee that his successor would not turn out to be thriftless and extravagant. A very recent case in India was based chiefly upon the reckless extravagance of the Ruler, and it is not likely to enhance the prestige of the States in the eyes of the investing public.

A regular audit was now established and the offices of Accountant-General and Finance Minister were combined in one person. This was an experiment of questionable wisdom. Neither in Baroda State nor anywhere else is the Accountant-General of the standing to carry sufficient weight, and as the men who fill the posts have no claim to be considered financial experts, their advice in financial matters cannot be implicitly accepted. The result has been to encourage interference by the so-called Finance Minister in departments of which he has but little knowledge, and in administrative detail which is better left to the heads of departments. That was not the Maharaja's intention. He desired that the finance officer of the State, by whatever name he might be called, should so supervise the various departments, none of which can be entirely independent of the Treasury, as to give him a working knowledge of the whole State, particularly in regard to 'powers of making new appointments with due

regard to the claim of old servants, and in spending the State money at their disposal'. He was in fact to be the Chancellor of the Exchequer. As an Accounts and Audit Department the new creation has worked efficiently; as the controlling financial authority it has fallen short of expectations.

IX

Scrupulous as the Maharaja has always been in respecting the susceptibilities of his countrymen in matters of ritual and religion with which he had no sympathy, his personal temperament and his deliberate convictions led him to seek for officers of his State from all sorts of races, regardless of caste and creed. The first Dewan of his own choosing was a Mahomedan; his second a Brahman from the British service; another a Parsi. He has now imported his chief officers from Bengal and from Madras; very few have been native-born Gujeratis, and still fewer were Marathas. There is one European in the list who held office for two years, but his original appointment was somewhat in the nature of an accident, as the untimely death of Mr. Romesh Dutt after only five months of office took the Maharaja by surprise. His ideas, indeed, regarding the employment of Europeans in the State appear to have undergone a change during the course of the years. No doubt his visits to Europe, and especially his growing familiarity with the European character as it was revealed to him by his large circle of friends, had much to do with this change of attitude. In March 1886 he writes to his Dewan, Kazi Shahab ud din:

'The employment of Europeans will as a permanent system be one of the worst measures in the interests of the States. The employment of the Goralokes will be something like the thin end of the wedge.'¹

¹ *Selected Letters*, vol. i, No. 4, p. 3, dated 19.3.1886.

There was an evident nervousness here. A Native State should be entirely native in character; that character it was certain to lose if the dominating—or shall we say domineering?—influence of the European was once tolerated. The use of the word ‘Goralokes’, though literally it only means ‘White folk’, was not flattering, though hardly so contemptuous as Lord Salisbury’s famous ‘black man’.

But in 1889 after his visits to Europe he had completely changed his views, for we find him writing to the then Dewan :

‘I think it would be most prudent to have one more European officer in the place of Mr. Elliot. Do you not think that it is useful sometimes in important matters to have a good European officer as a Member on the Council? When the Barkhali measure is being worked out you must be prepared for many appeals affecting the landed interests of many people and we shall have to give a most sound hearing to all such complaints ; and to do this we must have a small handy committee with liberal powers. In this we must have one European officer of good standing as a member.’¹

He makes, however, a discriminating use of these Europeans. He has never admitted that they have better brains than Indians, but he learned in Europe the value of method, the economy of time, and the harder fibre of the Northern races. It is a constant complaint of his that ‘our people are too soft’, by which he implies a greater readiness to yield to importunity, to cajolry, to threats, and other forms of pressure. Only once, however, as we have seen, has there been a European Dewan, and only twice has he admitted Europeans to the Council. On the other hand, Europeans have been freely employed in responsible positions, at the Bank (if not by his appointment, yet with his entire concurrence), in the Police, on

¹ Ibid., vol. i, No. 57, p. 43, dated 22.2.1889.

Land Settlements, in the Hospitals, and especially on the Railways, and at the College. When the Maharaja fell under the heavy cloud of suspicion that he was anti-English in sympathy and disloyal to the Crown, he exclaimed pathetically that he had taken more Europeans into his service than any other Prince. That is very probably true. Nor did he confine himself to the regular departments of State. For many years he was faithfully served in the royal stables by a Sergeant-Major of the Royal Artillery, an Irishman of the name of Fahey. His principal valet comes from England; his principal chauffeur from Italy. Her Highness has an English maid. And, most important of all to any lover of music, Major Wood has trained the band to a quite extraordinary degree of perfection. There is hardly any side of culture in which Europe differs more completely from India than music. It is a source of everlasting wonder that a party of Indian soldiers, sometimes conducted by Wood, sometimes by one of themselves, can once a week in the Public Park not only make pleasant sounds, ill-understood by the crowds of Indian strollers, but which really delight fastidious Englishmen with Hérold and Weber, Mozart or Mendelssohn or Rossini, to say nothing of Sullivan and Messenger and the latest revue. The Maharaja is proud of his band, and has every right to be. Rumour says that he has not much ear for music, but he sometimes listens to it in the privacy of his own home, and if he knows little of musical history and less of technique, he yet finds European music soothing to his nerves.

In dealing with Europeans, however, the Maharaja knew not only that the more pliant Asiatic might find it difficult to stand up to the sterner stock from the North, but that as men of business they were likely to be precise, to insist upon the due fulfilment of a promise, and to require justice without mercy on either side. 'In dealing

with Europeans', he says in an order, 'we cannot be too accurate and strict.' Everything should be in writing and nothing should be left to the chance of misinterpretation. This is a tribute to the business side of the Englishman; on the social side relations are always courteous and often cordial. The British Resident is always an honoured guest, and is treated as the local representative of His Majesty. With many Residents the Maharaja has been on terms of real friendship, which has by no means ended with their retirement; but his letters show that with some, and notably with two or three, his relations were only formal.

X

These reforms were not spectacular. In many ways the slow progress of time could alone prove their value and give them their full effect. In particular, the philosophy which sought to convert a temperamental attitude was spread over many years; leaven of that kind worked very gradually, almost imperceptibly. The policy of the Maharaja did not escape criticism, nor even opposition. We have seen how so harmless an operation as survey led to a small war with its accompaniment of bloodshed; Mr. Elliot and his assistants were in constant correspondence about less dramatic episodes. Retrenchment was resisted, especially in the Palace. When a new Stamp Act was published the merchants of Navsari in the south offered strenuous resistance, not caring to remember that no Government can function without taxation, and that this was only a substitute for the many obnoxious and irritating imposts which had been hampering trade. Their view seems to have been rather childish. They were quite prepared to accept gratefully the benefit of the abolition of anomalous taxes, but could not realize that Governments cannot forgo revenue without some kind of

compensation. Merchants in India are the spoilt children of the fiscal system. Not many taxes touch them, and as they usually live in towns, much of the taxation which falls most heavily upon the land is spent directly or indirectly for their advantage. The Maharaja had little patience with this unreasonable excitement; he stood firm and the merchants gave way. In a letter to the Minister, Laxman Jagannath, he says (29th July 1889):

‘It appears they did not give in gracefully and as they have gone all possible lengths, don’t you think, as I do, they have displayed anything but a commendable spirit? . . . As you know our best endeavours have been and will, I hope, be for some time to come to lighten their burdens. And if we have removed many obnoxious little taxes and duties, I see no reason for them to grumble. On the contrary, they ought to cheerfully bow to what is intended for the good of the many. They are more like spoilt children in the manner of their demand for the removal of the Act. The more kind we are, the more they ask.’¹

In so delicate and complicated a matter as administration it is easy to criticize. Because the terminology is easy, and because it ranges widely over subjects of common knowledge and everyday occurrence, every Tom, Dick, and Harry claims to have an opinion. Wiseacres might shake doubtful heads over the extension of female education, or the new message of hope to the depressed and despised classes. With greater justice critics might ask how the officers of the State could be expected to develop initiative when they were so circumscribed by rules and regulations, and when their powers were so strictly limited. Decentralization was declared to be the accepted policy; yet the State has been, and still is, a highly centralized organization. For all that a critic can pick holes, an immense advance had been made. The lines had been laid down during the minority, but the work had been

¹ *Selected Letters*, vol. i, No. 84, p. 60.

incomplete, and it had been necessary to consolidate the foundations before the Maharaja could give rein to his fancy and adorn the superstructure with original work. Now that the State had been brought into line with the Provinces of British India, now that the administration had been purified and had developed a real sense of public duty, it would march abreast, even occasionally ahead of the British Provinces. If the conceptions of duty are sometimes rather narrow, if the general outlook is often too restricted, the Maharaja can look with pride upon the loyalty and the high ideals which are now the common characteristics of the Baroda officers. Impatience finds faults, but the Maharaja himself in more complacent moments has gratefully acknowledged the co-operation which has made modern Baroda what it is.

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Chapter Thirteen

MORE REFORMS

'Education is the basis of all reforms and is the only way of salvation from our present condition.'—*Speeches and Addresses*, vol. i, p. 69.

SO spoke the Maharaja at Aligarh in 1901, and upon that maxim he has consistently acted. Over and over again, in season and out of season, through good report and evil report, he has preached education as the sovereign remedy for India. He was appalled at the ignorance: 'Educationally our people are little better than beasts.' Superstition, unthrift, the vast infant mortality, poverty, dirt—these were among the ills brought about by ignorance, and were stunting the moral and material advance of the country. In the train of education would follow a higher and purer life, the improvement of agriculture, the increase of wealth, and so (with an eye as usual on the community as a whole) the aggregate of social welfare would be increased.

The Maharaja gave long and anxious thought to the problem. One thing was clear to him. Under a voluntary system the thin stream of education might meander through the masses till the crack of doom, without very much result. Impatience could not afford to sit with hands folded and wait for the millennium. It was for the State to take the lead: 'People by themselves would do very little in the cause of public education.' The Maharaja was the father of his people, and a father's duty included the mental as well as the physical welfare of his children. But there was only one way by which this ideal could be attained, and that was by compulsion. The *Baroda Gazetteer* claims that, 'long before the rest of India had done more than think of the free and compulsory

education of the people as something desirable but hardly attainable, His Highness the Maharaja Gaekwar of Baroda had introduced it into his dominions, and he has since witnessed its successful development in the face of extraordinary difficulties'.¹ It is certainly true that Baroda was the pioneer in this matter of Compulsory Education. The Government of India looked on sympathetically.

It was an experiment, and as an experiment it was to be cautiously introduced. There was here no precedent, no means of comparison with British India or with any other State. As Baroda made its bed, so it must lie. It was, therefore, only after taking much counsel with his officers, and weighing all the implications and hazards of this great reform, that he decided to introduce it into the Amreli taluka, that is to say into his dominions in Kathiawar. He writes to his Dewan, Manibhai Jashbhai:

'We do not wish to be mere enthusiasts, doctrinaires or hobbyists, but rather the reverse. We are most willing to set our mistakes right. I must say that it will be a serious question whether the State will be able to afford much money. We are already spending almost as much as our income and this is not satisfactory. Knowing that we can afford to spend a few thousands without incurring serious responsibility, I direct that schools be supplied to all the villages of the Amreli Mahal.'²

The cost of this modest beginning was estimated at Rs. 32,000, or rather over £2,000. What exactly would happen if the scheme took root and flourished, it was difficult to say. Budgets have a habit of growing. The Maharaja thought that the cost, if education were compulsory all over the State, might be from 12 to 15 lakhs. But it should be done if it were possible:

'I wish to keep myself perfectly free. I cannot determine a policy till I can definitely find out by experience whether the

¹ *Baroda Gazetteer*, vol. ii, p. 310.

² *Selected Letters*, vol. i, No. 126, p. 87, dated 16.3.1893.

State can bear the burden of such an expensive plan of education. Nothing would be worse than to pledge what you cannot carry out. I have no hesitation in saying that we cannot do better than educate all our subjects. Education is absolutely necessary for the realization of my ambition and wishes and for the success of my policy.' ¹

And so the great scheme was launched. All boys from 7 to 12, and all girls from 7 to 10, were compelled to go to school, if they lived within a mile of the school, unless they were already educated up to the standard taught, and that was certainly not high. By 1906 the experiment was thought to have justified itself, and the scheme was extended to the whole Raj. An Act was passed. Penalties were imposed for non-attendance and exemptions were allowed for definite reasons, which included the advanced age or infirmity of the parents, or the dependence of the family on the children for bread. It sounds strange in European ears that the parent of a child of 7 or 8 should be of 'advanced age', or that a family could depend for its bread on little boys, but in India such things are possible. There is no restriction on the remarriage of men, and it has been one of the complaints of reformers that old men will sometimes marry young girls even up to an age when, in the ordinary course of nature, the child-wife of 16 may be left a widow in the course of a year or two. If the father is too old to work, and the mother too busy, there is nothing for it but to fall back upon the children who can earn boy's wages as cattle-tenders or farm-servants. It was the Maharaja's wish that the scheme should be applied to boys and girls alike of every caste and community. The only exception that he was prepared to consider was that of girls observing 'purdah', and into this point the Director of Public Instruction was to inquire. It followed, therefore, that some of the poorest, who lived a hand-to-mouth

¹ *Selected Letters*, vol. i, No. 126, p. 87, dated 16.3.1893.

existence, might in very deed be dependent on the pittance which their children could earn.

The public were deeply stirred by these measures, and not unnaturally, perhaps, there was some resistance. The peasantry had always used their children on the land, and resented compulsion as an encroachment upon their rights. They could see no sense in all this fuss about reading and writing. They had gone on very well without them, and why should these now be forced upon their children? But the Maharaja stood his ground. He publicly declared that he expected his people to co-operate and not to obstruct; the measure was for their ultimate good, and the Government, which was prepared to pour out money, would reap no pecuniary reward. He called upon the officers of Government to explain to the people the objects of his policy, and warned the former that it would be their duty to conduct a vigorous propaganda.

The scheme grew, and on the whole prospered. Speaking at Lahore in 1903, at a time before compulsion had been applied to the whole State, the Maharaja was able to announce at least a measure of success:

‘I began with the most backward districts, where people might be supposed not to understand the advantages of education. The experiment might have failed. But it has not failed. On the contrary the most sanguine expectations are being realized, and that notwithstanding the fact that a severe famine has broken out in the State. We have also to count with the purdah system. In spite of these and other disadvantages the experiment has been an almost unqualified success.’¹

He was in high spirits. He thought that his brother Princes, and (with a respectful bow towards Simla) even the British Government, might do worse than copy his example. The Indian people had an innate love of education. That was partly why he had been successful, and,

¹ *Speeches and Addresses*, vol. i, p. 126.

for the rest, he paid a graceful tribute to 'the tact, ingenuity, sagacity, and sympathetic attitude' of his Indian officers, showing thereby that the lashings of his official whip were only meant to spur the willing to greater effort.

About a year later he was in Allahabad. His fame was then, perhaps, at its zenith. The hall where he was to speak was packed to overflowing. We are told that

'age, learning, every race, creed and colour, and all professions were represented at the meeting. Old men tottering with the weight of years and busy professional men who had never before attended a meeting were there to testify by their presence to the universal love and admiration his countrymen feel all over India for His Highness, as much on account of his enlightened and thoughtful patriotism as of his most beneficial and progressive measures of administration.'¹

He was received with a storm of applause, and in the address presented to him pointed reference was made to compulsory education.

'Apastamba', said the deputation, 'lays down that in the realm none should suffer hunger, sickness, cold or heat, be it through want or intentionally. Some may regard this as an impossible ideal. . . . We trust that when the measure of compulsory education—which lies at the root of all progress—which Your Highness has inaugurated in your territories comes to fruition, and teaches self-help and resourcefulness to your people, the ideal will no longer be regarded as impossible of attainment. Knowledge has always been looked upon in India as the highest possession and its conferment as a gift of the greatest value. . . . The happiness of the subject being the sole end of good government, Your Highness has by providing for the education of all children in your dominions, laid the surest foundations for the attainment of that end.'²

Later on the sunrise had become to some degree overcast. If education was to be of any value, the results must be

¹ *Speeches and Addresses*, vol. i, p. 139.

² *Ibid.*, vol. i, p. 141.

lasting, and the Maharaja seems to have had some qualms that the department was inclined to be satisfied with mere numbers. He thought it advisable to issue a warning: 'Satisfaction in the increase of the mere number of schools is of little consequence.' The quality of the education and its effects upon the people were the real things that mattered. It was much better to have a few good schools than a quantity of bad or indifferent ones. When the people are forced to send their children to school, they must be satisfied that there is a real purpose in education, and that the sacrifices they are called upon to make are worth the making. To be effective a compulsory law must be strictly applied, but if the end is not achieved, strict measures cannot be justified. The ideal was after all a modest one. It was no more than that every child should have the chance of acquiring the three R's, a peep, as it were, into the enchanted halls of knowledge.

An agricultural population does not easily take to schooling. Seed-time and harvest, ploughing and weeding, come and go, and the day never arrives when the yokel feels the need of reading and writing. The simple minds of rustics cannot grasp anything beyond the immediate returns to be expressed in terms of cash, and such returns appeared to be infinitesimal if they existed at all. They could not see the object of learning to read that a hypothetical cat was sitting on an imaginary mat, when the boy or girl might be doing really useful work in the fields and earning good money. They came with their complaints to the Maharaja, but he was so firmly convinced of the overwhelming importance of education that he could not in their own interests abandon his scheme. The tooth had to come out even though the dentist might be hurting them.

And although the education of the whole State, however modest, was the first and most pressing need, the

children of the more advanced classes were not forgotten. It has often been remarked by critics that education in India has tended to become too literary, with the result that boys are not equipped for the battle of life except in one or two directions. The service of Government and the profession of the law were overcrowded. Boys jostled one another in the fierce competition to secure the humblest of livelihood in these two channels, and seldom thought of attempting any other career. The education system was blamed. Controversy will never have done talking about the most rational methods of education in India, and experts will never have done producing new experiments. There was in truth some reason for the boys' choice. Those professions which attract the youth of England were simply not open to them. The army belonged to the military caste and the martial races; the navy did not exist. Commerce, in a country three parts agricultural, was in the hands of a special caste or special communities. The response of the public to the qualified doctor, or the trained teacher, was not encouraging, and those who chose such careers as these found it safer and more profitable to carry them on under the aegis of Government.

A change has come with the march of the years. Commerce has expanded and become less exclusive. The qualified doctor is plentifully planted and finds his patients, and the student of to-day is as eager to learn the mysteries of engineering and economics as to wander through the Cretan mazes of the law. But long before this slow change had begun to show itself, the Maharaja had felt the difficulty. The orders which he gave were often not orders at all in the strict sense of the term; they could not be carried out; they were, as he said himself, the committal to paper of the thought that flitted through his brain—declarations of his creed, statements of possibly unrealizable ideals,

jotted down for the benefit of his officers. It is in one such order that he says :

‘I believe I may safely state that the B.Sc. degree or a Science education would be of greater help to the development of technical education in this country and at the same time be just as useful, if not more, in practical life than simple B.A.s or the Arts Course, but unfortunately experience shows that the people who are to take advantage of these institutions are not willing to give up their well-trodden course of study for new directions. He shared all Huxley’s enthusiasm for a scientific education.

‘In forming and liberalizing the mind,’ he said to an assembly of doctors and medical students, ‘Science instead of being deficient has a real and considerable advantage. It has unbounded largeness and scope of vision. It is superior to all other forms of human effort in the certainty and permanency of its results and the universality of its benefits. It encourages and forms the scientific habit of mind, that great staff and guide to the journey of life.’¹

The Maharaja had already tried to put these ideas into practice. In 1890 he founded the Kala Bhavan or ‘Home of Art’, for technical education, and lodged it in a building which is perhaps the most graceful and pleasing of all the public buildings in Baroda. It began with classes for drawing, carpentry, dyeing, and mechanical engineering, and an attempt was made to provide it with a scientific library in the vernacular at a cost of Rs.50,000, for the Maharaja holds that while English may be necessary as the medium of instruction in technical courses, Art and Science in the larger sense should be, and can be, taught in the mother tongue of the students. He has, however, confessed that his attempts have ended in comparative failure, because to impart knowledge in these subjects in the vernacular requires independent thought and deep

¹ *Speeches and Addresses*, vol. i, p. 52.

study, of which 'our people are incapable', with the result that it becomes compulsory to adopt English as the medium. But though he took the horse to the water he could not make it drink. The Kala Bhavan and the branches founded in various parts of the State languished for want of pupils. In 1902 the Maharaja found that

'the response among the people was so faint that after a time the institution had to be contracted within narrower bounds. Until the means of the people and the material wealth of the country expand, there can be but little demand for the work which such institutes turn out. So far the Kala Bhavan has done but little beyond providing skilled dyers for Bombay Mills; and until the people co-operate more earnestly its utility will not be recognized. Once more it is the prevailing ignorance which hampers every movement to help the people. They are sunk in a fatalistic apathy and do not care to learn how to help themselves.'¹

So discouraging was the response that, after an expert had reported in 1921, the Maharaja was inclined to close the institution. Wiser counsels prevailed. The school was reorganized in 1924 and is working vigorously. It badly needs adequate workshops and modern machinery, especially as out of 357 pupils in 1926-7 no less than 140 were in the Mechanical Engineering class. The modern trend, indeed, of Indian preferences is reflected in the school, for out of the number just quoted 226 were taking the courses in Civil and Mechanical Engineering, whereas the ancient crafts of India, in which she has achieved so much success, dyeing and weaving, attracted between them no more than 50.

II

Closely connected with Compulsory Education is the Library Movement, which is a special feature of the State,

¹ *Speeches and Addresses*, vol. i, p. 109

and in which it can claim to be the pioneer. Although the Maharaja is personally a lover of books and has himself written one or two, his many-sided activities, in education, in art, in music, in literature, have in their public manifestations only one aim—the cultural education of his people, and through his people of all India. He surveys the material condition of the peasantry, and finds much that is wanting; they are poorly clothed and badly fed; their ideas of sanitation are primitive; they lose their health, their economic energy, partly because they do not know, and partly because they do not care; they are steeped in an almost bottomless debt, and they seek from the soil what is too often little more than a maintenance, because they know no better method of farming than that which they have inherited from their fathers. That may be said of the peasantry all over India: it is not peculiar to Baroda State; and it is characteristic of the modern spirit that the energy of Governments is so largely directed towards the material improvement of the masses. British India has devised much. She has sought to correct sanitation, and among her most devoted officers are those who have patiently grappled with such tropical diseases as plague and cholera, leprosy and kala-azar; she has set up Co-operative Societies in competition with the immemorial money-lender; she has established an Agricultural Department which not only leads but learns, since it is for ever engaged in research in Agricultural Chemistry, in selection of strains, in mycology, and in entomology. She has introduced Veterinary Science for the care of animals, and has sought out many inventions in the sphere of Animal Husbandry.

All, or nearly all, this Baroda State has copied according to her means and according to her needs. But the Maharaja felt that something more was needed. Ignorance was at the root of everything, and if he was not the first

to discover the truth of that not very profound remark, he has more than most applied himself to the cure of the disease. If the people were satisfied with their own humble way of living, if they wanted no more than the food they ate and the clothes they put on, he must create in them a divine discontent, a striving after higher things, a desire to know what their own great men have said in the past, and what foreign nations have contributed to the knowledge and the culture of the world.

‘There is’, he said to a Gujerat literary society, ‘no more ennobling thing than the reading of good books : it leads men along flowery pathways towards earnest and pure lives. I am doing what I can to educate my people to the stage where they can read and appreciate great thoughts of the present and of the past, and the result so far has been very gratifying. But I would do more. I would bring to the poor man or woman, the ordinary man of the bazaar, to the common people everywhere this wealth of literature, now only known to the educated.’¹

In dealing with the evolution of various movements which are going on side by side in a State, while the actors on the stage are generally leading their quiet lives, the historian cannot be the slave of time. We are, in fact, out of our chronology. The Library department was not founded until 1910, and therefore belongs to the later period of the reign. But the idea had long been simmering in the Maharaja’s mind, and the Library Movement is so essentially a part of the whole scheme of cultural advance on which he had set his heart, that it would be an unwarrantable violence to separate it from its context.

The idea took final shape when the Maharaja visited America, where the library system was in advance of

¹ *Speeches and Addresses*, vol. ii, p. 321.

that in other countries. A contemporary newspaper applauded his discernment:

'The Gaekwar of Baroda', wrote the *World* (2nd Aug. 1910), 'has appointed an American, Dr. William Borden of Yale University, to take charge of the Chair of libraries which he intends to establish in his principality. The appointment not only testifies to the ability of Dr. Borden, but it is a distinct compliment to the library system which has been developed in the universities of America; and inversely it implies that the university library system in this country is antiquated and unpractical. And this is not far from the fact. The Gaekwar, himself an Oxford man' (which was of course a figment of the kindly imagination) 'has probably had experience of the miserable lack of method——'

and so on, with a fairly comprehensive gibe at the methods of the Bodleian.

Dr. Borden stayed three years in the State. He not only founded the Central Library, but he organized a system of free-aided libraries and reading-rooms throughout the Raj (for the Maharaja had insisted that all libraries should be free to every one, young and old, rich and poor, of all castes or none, and of any creed), and set up a sort of picture class or, as the account calls it in more precise official language, 'an agency for imparting visual instruction to the illiterate masses'. But it was the kindly and generous gift of the Maharaja which gave the library such a splendid start. He presented the young library with his own collection of some 20,000 volumes, in which history, biography, and social science were prominent. Dr. Borden handed on the torch to a young Maratha, who, unfortunately, died some few years later. He was succeeded by Mr. Newton Dutt, who is still in office. The Central Library now contains upwards of 100,000 volumes.

The Library Scheme has caught the popular fancy surprisingly. There are now well-established libraries in

45 of the larger centres, and upwards of 650 village libraries. Every one is proud of them. You are asked to look in at each village library in turn as one of the institutions of the place, though there may be nothing to do and practically nothing to see. Nor have the children been neglected. It was at the express desire of the Maharaja, who discovered the poverty of juvenile books in the vernaculars, that a special branch was added to the library, which contains a collection of some 3,000 English books for the young, and which is patronized not only by children, but also by adults too imperfect in the language to read advanced books. For young children who do not know English, games and pictures are provided as well as such books for the young as the Indian language affords.

This Library Movement has had a great influence for good, not only in stimulating the desire to read, but also in keeping alive such elementary knowledge as the rustic has gained from the schools. It is one of the great dangers of an agricultural community that, having no need to read or to write, they soon forget what they have learned. There seems to be a general tendency in India to imagine that when you have established a school and taught a certain number of boys and girls how to read and write, you may rest content with your achievement and may plume yourself upon your success. Everywhere there rises the cry for more and more education, more and more schools, without as it would seem very much regard to the ultimate result, and forgetful that schools are not an end in themselves but only a means to an end. 'It is the part of a gentleman', said a wag, 'not to know Latin but to have forgotten it,' and it would seem to be the part of the Indian rustic to have learned to read and write and to have forgotten how it is done. This amounts to making a fetish of education. It may be compared with the fetish of vaccination, which protects the infant but leaves the

grown man uncared for, as though the operation bore a magic charm which lasted indefinitely.

'Primary education', said the late Mr. St. Loe Strachey, 'might be described as fitting men to make use of a library. In learning how to read and write and cipher, men are, in effect, learning how to use the mental tools of existence. These tools are books, and books make a library. The wise State therefore sees to it that there is a plentiful supply of tools at hand, so that any one who wants to use them for his own and the public good can do so without impediment. To educate people and then not provide them with tools to work with is obviously an absurdity if not a crime.'¹

A sentiment not very deep, perhaps, but too often overlooked. The lapse into illiteracy, then, is one of the great dangers of the educational system in India. The children of the peasantry, brought up in an atmosphere of illiteracy, lacking the stimulus either of ambition or of the desire for knowledge, and taught in very many, perhaps in most, cases by men without imagination, without knowledge and without enthusiasm, soon forget the little they ever knew. The ordinary business of life gives no opportunity for practice; the seed has been sown and has germinated, but having no depth of earth it withers. Recent inquiries have shown that in spite of all the money poured out with magnificent, almost reckless generosity, upon this, perhaps the most favourite of the Maharaja's schemes, less than half of the pupils have profited permanently. It is here that the village library has played its part. Those who have developed beyond the drudgery of alphabet and grammar have, it was found, formed a real taste for reading; they enjoy at least the newspapers and periodicals which are supplied, and if they gain little more, they at least do not lose the faculty of reading and writing.

¹ *Baroda and its Libraries*, by N. M. Dutt, p. 58.

The success of the experiment has not been all that the Maharaja hoped for: the vision of a completely literate community is still very far from being realized. But it cannot be called a failure. It is at least something that a quite appreciable fraction of the people can now be classed as literate if by literacy we mean simply the faculty of reading and writing. The methods may have been faulty; there has been too great a desire to show numerical results, and too great an inclination to ignore the ultimate effects and the ends of education. But to diagnose the disease is to go a long way towards the cure, and with a change of method there is hope that desire will be quickened and that the vision may at last be realized. The Maharaja undertook to change the mentality of a people; that is a process as slow as the growth of an oak, and it is not surprising that even in a quarter of a century the sapling has not yet developed into the full-grown tree.

III

In many other ways, some of which will be found scattered through the pages of this history, the Maharaja sought the cultural advance of his people. The humblest of his subjects he invited to the threshold of the temple of learning; those who were better educated he encouraged to develop learning into knowledge. A little learning might be a dangerous thing, but a little knowledge never did any one any harm. He founded or gave handsome prizes for lectures by well-known authorities, he encouraged the writing of good books by promising the patronage of the State to aspiring authors of merit. He set up a school of Indian music which has been well attended, and quite recently he opened a new Musical Association which the lovers of the art had founded for its better understanding. Music in India, as in Europe, has been drooping. As in Europe the inspiration of the eighteenth and early nine-

teenth centuries seems to have degenerated in the twentieth into mere gymnastic cleverness, so the ancient art of India, perhaps more highly scientific than our own, more delicate and intricate if less sonorous and sublime, had degenerated into imitative preciosity. An All-India Music Conference was held in Baroda under the Maharaja's patronage in 1916, and though he was well aware that one cannot change the spirit of an art by taking counsel, and his own aims were far more modest, he fully realized the part that music plays in national culture, and did what he could to foster and encourage it. His own inclinations and tastes, however, run more in the direction of architecture and painting, in that which pleases the eye rather than the ear. In Europe he had seen many things and among them museums, and accordingly in 1894 the Baroda Museum was founded, and placed for over a quarter of a century in the hands of the Professor of Botany and Zoology at the College. But the idea grew and expanded, and a special Curator was required. The collection includes specimens from India and from Europe, and examples of local industries. Doulton ware and porcelain from Limoges and Sèvres, delicate glass from Europe are to be found side by side with exquisite saris of Indian make, with old arms, old coins, old inscriptions, and old sculpture drawn from various parts of India. And the whole is well housed in a fine building in the Public Park.

IV

But if it was desirable to set the feet of the people upon the path of modern progress, no less was it desirable to preserve what is good in the ancient and indigenous institutions of the country, for the Maharaja, anxious though he is to profit by successful advances in British India, upon which he has frankly modelled his administration, has

always disliked the idea of mere imitation. In his attempt to revive and encourage the spirit of the village community, however, he has done no more than what every British administrator would like to accomplish. India is a country of villages; each village is a self-contained unit. Self-government, though not equipped with all the modern machinery of recorded votes and ballot-boxes, of platform oratory and franchise qualifications, was by no means unknown in ancient India, and the village Councils were at once the best example and perhaps the only, if rather moribund, survival of the old economy.¹ By degrees their influence had decreased. There was no conscious or deliberate weakening. The powers of the village Councils did not, as some have thought, languish owing to any passion for centralization, nor because of any particular system of land settlement. It was rather the inevitable outcome of economic and political forces that brought their strength to weakness. New departments were formed and became more and more highly organized; roads, railways, and the improved means of transport enabled the officers to get to closer grips with the villages; as the country progressed, and with it the material wanted by the rulers to administer it, the gap between the educated and the illiterate classes grew wider; administration became at once more complicated and more efficient; the Courts of Justice were purified, and a highly developed system of law took the place of more primitive decisions; the introduction of a more modern plan of local self-government replaced the village Council

¹ Professor Jayaswal has learnedly shown that true republics existed in ancient times. He cites Megasthenes: 'They . . . report everything to the King where the people have a King, and to the Magistrates where the people are self-governed.' This has been interpreted to refer to villages, but the Professor points out that the Greeks knew well enough what a true republic was, and Megasthenes, who was no lightning tourist, is not likely to have made a mistake. But the republic rose, fell, and disappeared: the village unit has existed from immemorial time and still exists. (Jayaswal, *Hindu Polity*, vol. i, p. 63.)

by a more ambitious body which, in theory at any rate, looked after village needs as well as the larger interests of the community. But although there was no conscious desire to supplant and uproot the indigenous institutions, it must be confessed that those who had in charge the ordering of India did not realize where their measures were tending, and that in the modern European conception of Government there was no sufficient room for the village Council, unless room was made for it. The village headman lost much of his power and prestige, and the process was hastened by making him a paid servant instead of a landed gentleman. The village came to look upon the institutions of Government as the one agency for the redress of their complaints. The awakening came too late. Strenuous efforts have been made everywhere to revive the village Council, here and there with some qualified success, but for the most part with the result of raising the pale ghost of a dead past.

It is claimed for the Baroda State that 'it justly prides itself on the fact that from the commencement of its land settlement operations, great efforts have been made to preserve as much of the ancient self-government in the villages as possible'.¹ The Maharaja was particularly anxious that this should be done; for it might almost be called a fundamental axiom of Indian politics that the village is the unit, and that upon it must be based any successful scheme of self-government. Mr. Elliot, writing in 1893, described the question as one 'which His Highness the Maharaja has personally fostered and made his own. His generous wish is that the village should once again be self-ruling.' And the Maharaja in a letter to the Minister from Nice told him to

'tell Mr. Elliot that he must, at least in 100 villages, introduce the *elective village Councils* before he leaves India. I am deeply

¹ *Baroda Gazetteer*, vol. ii, p. 225.

interested in that measure and wish to extend it to all my State. If properly worked it will turn out a most useful measure. It will be a keystone of what I wish to develop in my State. Do not believe that I am going to have other elective bodies like that. . . . I hate to have a constitution which will weaken the hands of the already feeble Rajas. In their solid strength lies the interest of the people.’¹

Time was to modify these somewhat uncompromising views, but although Local Boards have since been established their powers are limited and are subject to strict control.

In 1892 the Maharaja wrote that he ‘had lately sanctioned a Municipal Scheme which embodies in it the rules and principles of election’. It was frankly an experiment: ‘let us see how it works’. But it was not until 1904 that the Local Self-Government Act was passed, which set up boards in every district and sub-district in the Raj. There was a strong official element in them and a strict control was maintained. It was perhaps a bold experiment, following in principle, and to some extent in detail, the movement towards democracy in British India, but it has had only a qualified success. The principal roads and other public works remained with the State Department; the boards were given full control over primary education, but they neither understood the compulsory measure nor cared to enforce it, with the result that Government resumed control; medical and sanitary work was left to the Medical Department, and though the Local Boards have some kind of shadowy control over veterinary work, the technical management is with the Director of Agriculture. Shorn of all the principal work which usually falls to a Local Board, not because of any jealousy on the part of the Maharaja and his Government, but from a distrust of their own administrative powers, the Local

¹ *Selected Letters*, vol. i, No. 140, p. 103, dated 28.1.1894.

Boards showed a tendency to confine themselves to village works. They thus became a hindrance rather than a help to the revival of the village Council which they were supposed to encourage, on which they were in theory built, and to which the Maharaja had given so much attention. The whole question recently came under examination, and the Maharaja has now sanctioned a scheme which is designed to foster these village Councils, and includes machinery for training them in an art almost forgotten.

Of all the administrative measures in this very fruitful reign nothing, perhaps, has given less satisfaction than this matter of local self-government, not because it gave too much but because it did not give enough. The whole of India is seething with political excitement. With pathetic obstinacy it clings to the democratic illusion as the great solvent of political diseases, and Swaraj must run, it is claimed, through the whole body politic from the Government of India to the humblest local body. The Maharaja is content to work slowly. He is not averse to the grant of local self-government, and has said so not once but many times. His reply to an address of the Baroda Municipality is typical:

‘I cannot help saying to you that my own ideal, and that of my Government, is not to keep the ruled entirely aloof from the ruler, and from the work of administration. That Government which joins hands, and takes the help of the people, and answers their wishes and wants sympathetically and liberally, is in my opinion the best Government. If I am spared long, and if the administration is supported in all its liberal measures by the people, I shall endeavour to advance this reform until the moral and material conditions of the people have been so developed that they will be able to take a substantial and intelligent interest in the affairs of Government.’¹

These general sentiments do not satisfy. The cry is

¹ *Speeches and Addresses*, vol. ii, p. 345.

for elected Presidents of Local Boards, for more elected members, for a larger share in local administration. The controversy, if controversy it can be called, is based upon the everlasting question of the psychological moment. The cautious ruler, mindful of his responsibilities to the people, declares that the hour has not yet struck when they can be entrusted with the full powers of self-government; the people, enthusiastically confident and enthusiastically impatient, cry out that they have, and that long ago. Impatience wants to drive faster; prudence would put the drag on. Each has its own reasons and its own arguments, and who shall say which is right? A *via media* may be found; meanwhile the last word is with the Maharaja, and it is upon his shoulders that the burden of the State rests.

V

But neither by teaching children to read and write, nor by setting up popular machinery, was the Maharaja contributing to the material needs of his people. Sir T. Madhav Rao had looked wistfully upon irrigation but had put the idea aside because Gujerat was too flat, the rainfall was too light, and the risk of failure was too great. His fears have come unfortunately true. In 1885 a separate irrigation branch was formed and irrigation works were vigorously pushed through. Various causes, however, have denied them the popularity which is usually enjoyed by such works, and with few exceptions, there has been no adequate return upon the money spent. The money has, however, not been wasted. Such works as these have their indirect advantages, and the State has by no means given up hope that upon further investigation, and with a change of administrative management, much may yet be made of a scheme which is so obviously to the advantage of the peasant cultivators.

But if surface irrigation has not achieved all that was expected of it, well irrigation has thriven exceedingly under the fostering care of the Maharaja. He is fully alive to the aggregate importance of using the subsoil water, and he has not only encouraged well sinking by word, but has given the people every facility that a State can give. In this respect the response has been hearty, and there are now many thousands of wells scattered all over the Raj.

Gujerat, however, is not an easily irrigable country, and the Maharaja has confessed that 'chronologically, it was my railways that first occupied my thought'. The configuration of the country—generally a flat plain without a stone to throw at a dog—made the building of roads extremely difficult and costly. Bridges would in any case be needed if the roads were to do the work required of them—for the Indian river, dry and difficult in the hot weather, becomes in the rains a roaring, impassable torrent. A railway without bridges was of course unthinkable, but the railway would supply quicker and more efficient transport than the roads, maintained at a high cost and then necessarily imperfect, could be expected to do. The idea of railways first originated with Maharaja Khande Rao, who seems to have been spurred on by the great impulse of the Viceroyalty of Lord Dalhousie, but they had not got very far when Sir Madhav Rao handed over the charge of the State to the young Maharaja. His imagination seems to have been fired by the prospect of covering his State with railways. As early as March 1892 he was able to boast that 'he had already seen 118 miles of railway constructed and could look forward to further progress. It was not only that the public convenience had been consulted, but his scattered dominions were now linked together by the iron road to the improvement of the administration.'¹ Of all his

¹ *Speeches and Addresses*, vol. i, p. 29.

many reforms, of those at any rate undertaken for the welfare of his people, none has been dearer to the Maharaja's heart than the extension of his railways. Earnings were a secondary matter. The earnings of a railway depend largely upon the length of open road, and the short distances which are alone possible within a State of the size of Baroda cannot compete with the thousands of miles over which the great railway systems run. The Bombay, Baroda, and Central India Railway, which was begun in 1853, now has a total mileage of some 2,500 miles. The Baroda State Railways have a mileage of upwards of 700 miles, they carry between four and five million passengers a year, and about 500,000 tons of goods.

The schemes here set forth—or most of them—cannot be judged by results. The grafting of modern ideas upon traditions and customs, to which the people cling with an almost pathetic insistence, is an infinitely slow progress for which infinite patience is needed. The Royal Agricultural Commission, in a volume of 750 pages, has said little that every Indian administrator has not been striving after for years with very moderate success; and in spite of all they had suggested or recommended they summed up the case in their 'conviction that no substantial improvement in agriculture can be effected unless the cultivator has the will to achieve a better standard of living. . . . Of all the factors making for prosperous agriculture by far the most important is the outlook of the peasant himself.'¹ The advice of every doctor in India is as the voice of one crying in the wilderness, so long as the people defiantly ignore the elementary rules of sanitation; and infant mortality cannot be appreciably checked until the ignorant mother has learned to treat her baby in a rational way. If the Government of India is to be judged by such matters as these, then assuredly it has

¹ *Royal Commission on Agriculture in India Report*, p. 672.

been a failure; and if that is patently untrue, we cannot apply a different standard to the Maharaja. He has built not for the present but for the future. It is a common failing of Indians that a scheme begun in enthusiasm is dropped in disgust because it has not shown immediate returns. The Maharaja has persisted in his schemes; the leaven is working and the time of achievement will come, though it may not be in this generation, nor in the next, nor even in the third.

Chapter Fourteen

OKHAMANDAL

THE desolate and windswept country which lies in the north-western angle of the Kathiawar Peninsula has a history all its own. Here was the earthly kingdom of the god Shri Krishna who appears in the *Mahabharata*, the gigantic Indian counterpart of the *Iliad*, partly as a god and partly as a hero with semi-divine attributes. The legend is there told how when the quarrel between the Pandavas and Kauravas had passed the point of possible reconciliation, the respective leaders, Duryodhana for the Kauravas and Arjuna for the Pandavas, went to Dwarka to invoke the aid of the King. Krishna was asleep and the two leaders stood, one at his head and one at his feet, until he awoke. When he had heard their story, he offered an alternative choice: each supplicant should get something. The one should have an incredible number of soldiers and the other the King himself, unattended, and as a non-combatant. Arjuna who had stood at the feet, and on whom, therefore, the eyes of the awakened King first rested, was given the first choice, and he unhesitatingly chose Krishna himself. Throughout the war the king of Dwarka accompanied the Pandava host: he it was who, as Athene—Ruskin's Queen of the Air—drove the chariot of Diomed, acted as the charioteer of Arjuna, the incomparable archer, and brightest and most attractive of the Pandava brothers. Throughout the *Mahabharata* he appears as the Indian analogue of Carlyle's Odin—the Hero as God. In the *Bhagavat Gita*, the Lord's Song, which to pious Hindus is what the Sermon on the Mount is to pious Christians, he is all divinity, but it is admitted by all competent scholars that the *Bhagavat Gita*, together with many other parts of the incredible Epic, is a later interpolation. Dwarka then is the earthly kingdom

of one who, whatever may have been the stages of transition, is now universally worshipped throughout India as one of the latest (and therefore highest, since they are in an ascending scale) of the avatars of Vishnu. Dwarkanath, the Lord of Dwarka, is a boy's name apparently peculiar to Gujerat.

Dwarka itself, the capital of Okhamandal, if by such a name it can be dignified, is singularly picturesque as seen from the railway. The very absence of trees adds to the effect and gives it the appearance of a thriving town springing out of the desert. High over all, towers the great temple which is the symbol, though not the cause, of the sanctity of the place. Round it cluster the houses of the place rising in tiers, one above the other, and all directly or indirectly owing their existence to the temple. Some twenty miles away is the comparatively new port of Okha, with its modern equipment of piers and sidings, of cranes and tugs and barges; and over against it, separated by a narrow arm of the sea, is the island of Beyt, where yet another temple of peculiar sanctity is the life and the justification of the whole place.

The disposal of these holy places had fallen to the British in the circumstances shortly to be described, and in 1817 Maharaja Anand Rao made earnest representations to the East India Company that, as Dwarka and Beyt were greatly venerated by Hindus, the grant of them to the Hindu Government of Baroda would be very much appreciated. He seems to have based his request on this point alone, not as of right but of favour, as a concession to Hindu sentiment. The Company consented. By Article 6 of the Treaty of 1817 the Maharaja received in full sovereignty the island of Beyt and the Province of Okhamandal, subject to mutual rights relating to the Port, to the establishment of a store-house on Beyt free of any taxes, and to the proper treatment of the company's store-keeper.

II

The Waghers of Okhamandal seem to have been a peaceful fishing tribe about the eleventh century, but their earlier history is lost in obscurity. The rulers of the place were then two Rajput clans called Herol and Chowra, but certain branches of the Rathor family of Marwar, having been banished from that place, migrated to Okhamandal, where they treacherously fell upon the Rajputs at a friendly feast. The survivors of this massacre took refuge with the Waghers. Later on a prince or noble of Cutch, having come to Okhamandal, became enamoured of a Rajput girl, who had for the reason just given been brought up in a Wagher family, and by his union with her the various tribes became united; but for the sake of distinction the issue of their marriage and their descendants took the title of Maneck, a brave but turbulent class which was much in evidence in the subsequent disorders.

This early history is, however, only fragmentary. Though many details are wanting, it accounts in a general way for the organization and influence of the Wagher tribes when they first came into contact with the British power. By the early years of the nineteenth century they seem to have become professional pirates, and some time between 1801 and 1804 they seized a vessel, plundered it, and flung the crew overboard, in much the same fashion as the Chinese pirates of to-day are in the habit of doing off the south-east coast of China. But they either had, or rumour said they had, drowned two English passengers, a man and woman, and the Bombay Government at once sent armed vessels against them, to demand compensation. They seem to have accomplished nothing and, the Government having its hands full with other matters, the affair was allowed to lie dormant.

In 1807, Colonel Walker and Vithal Rao Diwanji,

representing the Baroda Government, accompanied by a mixed force, made another unsuccessful attempt, and again in 1809, when they extorted a promise to pay Rs. 1,10,000—a promise only made to be immediately broken.¹ But in 1816 the district was subdued by the combined forces of Vithal Rao and Colonel East, and the authority of His Highness the Gaekwar was established. Further disturbances, however, occurred in 1818 and 1819, and in 1820 Dwarka was taken by storm.

It is not very clear how the Baroda Government came to be combined with the British authorities in these operations, but it seems that Baroda had then established some kind of suzerainty over the peninsula of Kathiawar, where the various chiefs were tributary to it. In a letter from the Bombay Government to the Resident dated the 24th March 1809, they admitted that 'the Honourable Company had contracted to protect the peninsula of Gujerat', which of course means Kathiawar—'as allies of the Gaekwar State', and it was therefore 'an object of primary consideration to obtain a renunciation . . . from the Cutch Government of all pretensions to interfere in the concerns of the Kathiawar Territories'. The British were generally interested in the maintenance of law and order, and more particularly in the suppression of the piracy, which had been continuing without intermission over a series of years. So unsettled, however, was Okhamandal, and so powerless did the Baroda Government seem to be to deal with it, that it was realized that, upon the conquest of the place, the East India Company might with justification claim to keep it. Article 7 of the Treaty of 1817 was, however, only part of a supplemental treaty which, when read with the main treaty of the same year, constituted a three-cornered settlement of claims between the Peshwa, the Gaekwar, and the British, and it seems to have been

¹ See Introduction.

intended to set at rest all possible matters of dispute between the two latter.

For the time being piracy subsided, but in 1833 there was another outbreak. This led to further naval intervention by Bombay, and to the downfall of the Baroda Manager of Beyt, who had been implicated in the attack. An abortive rebellion broke out on land also, and so unsettled was the whole country that the entire system of control came under examination. The Political Agent had reported that he had grave reasons to suspect the Baroda Government of fomenting private quarrels, and of inciting to acts of violence, in order 'to subject them (the Waghers) to the penalty of criminals and deprive them of their hereditary rights', or, in other words, to make the Waghers so compromise themselves as to leave the Baroda Government a free hand to deal with them and their property as they pleased. Nothing seems to have been done at the time. Murders, piracy, and disorder continued. In 1845 the patience of the Government of India was exhausted, and they issued what was, in fact, an ultimatum, that the Gaekwar must settle his own affairs with his own men; and if he could not do so, the British would take over the district and hold it until Baroda had paid all the expenses of the proposed expedition. His Highness protested, and the negotiations drifted off into an academic discussion of the interpretation to be put upon article 4 of the Treaty of 1805, which guaranteed British assistance in certain specified circumstances.

Rome, however, continued to burn while Nero was fiddling. The position was anomalous, in that while the British were most reluctant to assume entire responsibility, the alternative was to look on, to protest, and everlastingly to be called in to restore order. British opinion was veering towards the former alternative, but the authorities hesitated to take the plunge. The Durbar looked

with no favourable eye upon the prospect of surrendering Okha with the protection of the pilgrims, and the management of the holy places, to an alien Government, and the Resident declined to press it. The fact was that the whole situation was full of electric possibilities; the Baroda Government had the power but could not, or would not, use it; the British authorities could not intervene except by way of protest and advice, and when their active intervention was sought for. Matters drifted on, however, with a continuous ground swell in Okhamandal, and without overt disagreement between the Baroda Government and the Political Agency, and in 1857 the storm of the Mutiny swept over India.

III

The question was to be settled by the Waghers themselves. On 1858 they succeeded in gaining the possession of the fort and island of Beyt, by the treachery of the mixed garrison of Arabs, Sindhis, and local sepoys. It was proposed to bring European troops from Karachi, but the Bombay Government demurred. They thought that as the State had ample troops for such purposes they should use them; they declined, in short, to pull the Gaekwar's chestnuts out of the fire for him. But the plans had gone too far. The troops came and were repulsed, being too weak in artillery to make any impression on the walls. Next day, however, the Waghers evacuated the fort; the rebellion collapsed with the arrival of State troops, and all was quiet once more.

But not for long. Tales of the Mutiny had filtered through, and with them the legend of the complete destruction of British power in India. In 1859, therefore, the Waghers again rebelled. They seized Dwarka and made every show of a formidable resistance. Now at last the assumption of full control of Okhamandal by

the British began to take shape as practical politics, and this time the offer came from the Baroda Government. The Resident sent the request to the Government of India, making the stipulation that exclusive authority should be given to the officer in command of all troops to conduct the operations, and to make a settlement; and that the Baroda Government should undertake to assent to any measures which the Government of India might think necessary for the future management of Okhamandal. These terms seem to have been ratified,¹ and Okhamandal passed temporarily into the hands of the British.

The dual control in which one party had the authority but not the power, and the other the power but not the authority, had been largely responsible for the perpetual state of unrest. With every fresh vacillation the Waghers took heart of grace, and the work done once had to be done over again. Now that the Baroda Government had completely surrendered the conduct of affairs, and the British had undertaken the subjugation of the peninsula, they resolved to make a good job of it. Lieutenant Barton was sent into Kathiawar, but before he could begin his work Beyt had fallen into the hands of the rebels. The plan of the Resident was a combined sea and land attack, the ships bombarding the sea walls of Beyt Fort. The Waghers resisted bravely, and it was not till after a week's steady bombardment that they evacuated the Fort. Unfortunately Lieut.-Col. Donovan, who appears to have been in command, and to have regarded his action solely from the military standpoint, resolved to destroy the temples at Beyt, in spite of the remonstrances of Lieutenant Barton, who pointed out that the temples were venerated and visited by all classes of Hindus throughout India, and feared that their demolition would be regarded 'far and wide with feelings of dis-

¹ The reply of the Government of India is not available.

satisfaction'. What was the effect in India generally does not appear, but when the time came for rebuilding, a quarrel arose between Baroda and Nawanagar over the honour of being the restorer of the holy places. The British declined to decide the matter, holding that the arbitration of religious disputes was best undertaken by professors of the religion, and when the honour was finally awarded to Baroda, Nawanagar showed its resentment by withdrawing or reducing the contribution made by itself and its subjects.

The Baroda Government evidently contemplated immediate restoration, for nobody had any doubt that the rebellion would be quelled. They admitted the necessity of chastisement, but requested that when order had been restored by the British, the district should be handed back to them, at the same time giving a sort of undertaking that they should maintain a force sufficient to keep order as the British might advise. Meanwhile the force, having reduced Beyt, advanced on Dwarka. The rebels evacuated the fort on the 1st November 1859 and it was occupied by the British troops, fortunately without any injury to the great temple. The defeated Waghers were chased out of Okhamandal and were finally brought to bay by Major Honner, who captured 700 of them. The rebellion having thus collapsed, the question arose what terms should be offered, and this involved the further question of the position of the Baroda Government in Okhamandal. Although the Resident had stipulated in his report to the Government of India that the British authorities must have an entirely free hand, and that the Durbar must agree to any scheme of management which the Government of India decided to adopt, it does not appear that the Baroda Government were ever asked to consent to these conditions, though they were tacitly implied. It was evidently contemplated that the district

would be restored to Baroda, but the whole affair was in a tangle, and the Resident, in writing to the Government of Bombay (10th December 1859), observes that 'it had not been decided by the Government of India what eventually the position of Okhamandal was to be with reference to the Gaekwar and the British Government'.¹ The Secretary of State also felt the difficulty. He was in doubt whether the cession to the British Government was for the period of the operations only, or whether 'His Highness has been induced permanently to place the district at our disposal subject to such future arrangements as may be determined by the British Government',² and the Resident declared bluntly that the Gaekwar's managers, the Political Agent, the Resident, and the Gaekwar had all been placed in a false position by the system that had been in force. Although the immediate question at issue was whether Okhamandal should be placed under the control of the Political Agent in Kathiawar, or under the Resident at Baroda, there was no doubt that, as already mentioned, the existence of a dual control had to some extent paralysed the administration. Eventually it was decided that His Highness should equip and maintain a body of 300 men under the command of European officers, and that these officers should be subordinate to the Resident. It appeared, therefore, that the British Government had decided to retain a limited control of Okhamandal on behalf of the Maharaja, who, however, was to have an agent for the general administration of the district.

The orders seem to have been vague and to have given rise to a great deal of misunderstanding. At first Captain Barton was in sole command, but when the new arrangement came into force and Major Johnstone was appointed, the Resident told him that he would have political and

¹ *Okhamandal Selections*, Part I, p. 80.

² *Ibid.*, p. 82.

judicial control of the whole Wagher population, while the Baroda Agent was to manage all the other affairs of the district. Major Johnstone, however, interpreted these instructions in a very liberal manner, demanding that the Baroda Agent should be considered subordinate to himself, and making complaints of the manager in matters with which he had no concern; and in spite of warnings from the Residency, his successor also acted in a manner which called forth a protest from the Durbar and a rebuke from the Resident. Matters were better managed under the tactful Captain Scott, but it is abundantly clear that the line of the division of labour was extraordinarily blurred, and the following letter from Sir T. Madhav Rao is some justification of the British officers who were held to have exceeded their powers:

'In several instances arrangements here have got so complicated that it is difficult without assistance to obtain clear conception of the same. This is my apology for troubling you with this reference. The Treaty states that the Province of Okhamandal and the island of Beyt were made over to the Gaekwar "with all the rights of sovereignty thereof". . . . Yet I observe in practice that some of the administration is exercised by the British officers. . . . I am desirous of knowing as precisely as possible on what footing such an arrangement exists, what part of administration is exercised by British officers, with what reservations, if any, what are the relations of such officers with His Highness' Government in the management of the Province, and so on.' ¹

The reply of the Resident was not very helpful. He merely sent a book of Selections, and remarked that

'the Criminal and Civil Jurisdiction over the Waghers and charge of the Battalion and of Police arrangements have been vested in the Assistant Resident, and all dealings with the "Rasti" population, charge of temples and Revenues, etc. have been with the Gaekwar's Manager.'

¹ Ibid., Part II, p. 175.

² Ibid., p. 176.

Sir T. Madhav Rao was left to make what he could out of this extraordinary answer; history does not relate the joy with which he received this useful information.

IV

For a long time the embers of the rebellion continued to smoulder. Isolated outlaws—singly, or in bands of two or three—wandered about in the jungles with which Okhamandal was then covered, and the early Assistant Residents continued to urge the destruction of these forests as the only certain way of reducing the District to law and order. This was gradually done, and now Okhamandal presents the appearance of a barren and treeless plain, where once the jungles enabled the Waghers by their superiority in woodcraft to baffle the disciplined forces sent against them. Thenceforward the British seem rather to be the protectors of the Waghers than the allies of the Baroda Durbar in keeping the peace. The district was to some extent developed, but the chief measure of pacification was the settlement of the Waghers upon the land, on terms which reflected the anxiety of the authorities to avoid another outbreak of piracy and lawlessness. No period had been fixed within which the British intervention should be determined, and as the fear of rebellion could not be said to have entirely disappeared, and no one could predict what might happen if the stronger hand were withdrawn, one Assistant Resident succeeded another in an apparently indefinite line. His Highness, in an order of uncertain date, expressed the despair of the State in ever recovering full sovereignty in Okhamandal:

‘Some of our officers express a sunny hope that the Government of India will relax their political grip over the Okhamandal Taluka if our State exerts itself for the prosperity of the Taluka and the uplift of the people. That we should develop

the Taluka is proper and sensible; but to hope that the British will loosen their grasp is forgetting history.’¹

There was some justification for this fear. The nineteenth century had become the twentieth, and still there was no suggestion of any rendition; but the Maharaja’s fear that the British Government really coveted the harbour was not worthy of him, and was evidently the outcome of a passing irritation. The Baroda Government itself had made no overtures towards evacuation by the British authorities, and the Maharaja was secure in the article of the Treaty of 1817, which guaranteed Okhamandal to him in full sovereignty. It was really a question of time and of initiative. The British Government, which had all along held the view that the Waghers were addicted to piracy and robbery for want of some more settled occupation, not unnaturally wanted to give the new system long enough to become firmly established. It was this policy which induced the successive Residents to submit to the annoyance of correspondence on petty detail. The then Resident writes in 1898 with reference to one of these petty cases :

‘Granted that the land was given to the Wagher as a pure matter of favour, let me remind you that the whole system of the grant of land to Waghers is based on favour, but both generally and in this specific instance there is a principle underlying the favour, and the favour and the principle are alike based on political exigencies. As you are aware, the principle is the desirability of providing members of a criminal tribe with the means of occupation and an honest livelihood, and conversely the undesirability of having such persons wandering discontentedly about the country seeking whom they may devour, simply for the want of employment and means of subsistence.’²

But though there were isolated instances of disagree-

¹ *Huzur Orders* (translated by Mr. Lele).

² *Okhamandal Selections*, Part II, ch. iv, p. 294.

ment, the two parties to the dual control were at one in working towards the same end, the pacification of the Waghers and their ultimate settlement as peaceful cultivators. The British Government had not, in fact, the slightest intention of holding on to Okhamandal, which every consideration of policy urged them to release at the earliest moment consistent with safety. They held no land in Kathiawar; the possession of an isolated corner, far away from any British possessions, would have been most inconvenient; the port, which His Highness thought was coveted, was not even thought of except by himself, and though he may have indulged in the splendid vision of a harbour which would rival Bombay and Karachi, that particular prospect was not likely to appeal to the British Government; the place was not profitable, the cost exceeded the revenue, and, as the Baroda Government impressed upon the Residency, its only value lay in the same honourable sentiment of devotion which took the Crusaders to Palestine. In 1905 the Resident seems to have toyed with the idea of withdrawing the British control, and in 1916 the same thought flitted through the mind of his successor but was put aside because in 1904, at the instance of Dewan Bahadur V. M. Samarth, a distinguished servant of the State, the idea was mooted of a railway which should connect Okhamandal with Jamnagar, and the Resident thought that it would be better to await developments. The question of rendition, however, came into prominence in 1919 by a trivial accident. The Assistant Resident had retired and no officer was immediately available to take his place. The Resident snatched at the opportunity of reopening the question, and announced to the Baroda Government that he was prepared to recommend the restoration of complete sovereignty upon certain conditions.

V

By this time the Wagher had more or less settled down to a peaceful life, but what is bred in the bone will out in the flesh, and there was still a lurking danger that he would revert to his old practices. The picture is not attractive:

‘He still breeds more or less true to type: he is thriftless, and incredibly idle: not ashamed to live on doles from the Durbar or the earnings of his women, and he has doubtless not forgotten what he considers his glorious past. . . . Outlawry still offers some attraction, and there can be little doubt that if the Waghers were mishandled by the local officers some of them would resort to this mode of life and make themselves the terror of the country-side in Kathiawar.’¹

For all that, conditions had greatly changed. The jungles which gave shelter to the outlaws had gone; very few of the Waghers possessed arms; the improvement in communications, and especially the construction of railways, had made things much easier. The future depended very largely on the maintenance of the existing land-tenure, and upon liberal treatment in respect of arrears of debt to the State. Fortunately, the Resident found the State in a complacent mood. The interference of the British Resident in the internal affairs of Baroda never failed to exasperate the Maharaja, and although the management of the Waghers had been delegated by express arrangement, Baroda none the less regarded it as interference, all the more because there seemed to them no real justification for prolonging indefinitely what at the first had promised to be a very temporary occupation. The Government were therefore prepared to meet the Resident half-way and to consent to his conditions. They proposed to remit all but an

¹ *Okhamandal Selections*, Part VI, pp. 4-5.

insignificant amount of the outstanding arrears, a proposal which the Resident characterized as 'a piece of splendid generosity'.¹ They agreed to the condition that the Waghers should be free to present their petitions to the Residency for a period of five years, on the ground urged by the Resident that too drastic a change all at once might breed a want of confidence in the Baroda Government. At the same time, the Dewan pointed out that during the process of weaning, the Wagher had behaved like spoilt children. They had 'learned to disdain hard toil because opportunities have been freely supplied to them for earning an easy livelihood'.² They could not go abroad without passes, and like caged birds they had lost the use of their wings, or, as the Dewan put it with a quaint mixture of metaphors, 'they have lost the ability to fly out and stand on their own legs'.

The rendition was agreed to by the Government of India, practically on the same conditions as those originally offered by the Resident. They, however, added a further stipulation that the Baroda Government would undertake to pay compensation for any damage done by Baroda Waghers in neighbouring territory. This alluded to a quaint but obsolete custom. If the subjects of one State committed crimes in another State, the village from which the offenders came was held responsible for the payment of damages to the injured village. The procedure was for the one State to pay to the other, the former recovering from its own village, and the latter making over the proceeds to the village entitled to it. The Dewan very rightly objected to the revival of this obsolete custom. Not only would the compensation probably fall upon the Government, since the Waghers were a poverty-stricken lot, but since the District of Okhamandal was surrounded only by the territory of

¹ *Okhamandal Selections*, Part VI, p. 7.

² *Ibid.*, p. 12.

Jamnagar, the condition amounted to imposing upon the suzerain Power, Baroda, an obligation which was not imposed upon the tributary, Jamnagar. The arguments were too cogent to be resisted, and the Government of India waived the obnoxious condition. On the 3rd May 1920 the British control came to an end. It had lasted for sixty years and might, perhaps, have ceased sooner; but when a decision rests upon psychological factors, there will always be a difference of opinion as to the precise moment when it should be taken. The British had resolved to make an end of the Wagher troubles once for all; and though, especially at first, there had been difficulties with the Durbar regarding the division of authority, the arrangement had on the whole been satisfactory. The district had been pacified; the Waghers had been settled upon the land upon liberal terms of tenure; the destruction of the jungles had wrought irreparable havoc and had probably had insensible effects upon the place, but it had made it practically impossible for a rising to occur again with any hopes of success. The Resident, in announcing the decision to the assembled Waghers, paid a glowing tribute to the policy of the Baroda Government, which had uniformly offered conciliation and liberal concessions in order to encourage a settled life of contentment, industry, and peace.¹ He spoke of 'the efficiency of the Baroda administration, in which the Government have every trust', and advised the Waghers to 'look to the Baroda Government as their benign protector'. The long-cherished wish of the Maharaja had come to pass, and he was again to possess Okhamandal in full sovereignty. When every one was pleased compliments were not likely to be wanting, and the Dewan returned in kind the warm expressions of the Resident. He acknowledged the sympathy of the British Government during the last sixty

¹ Ibid., pp. 23-4.

years, and reminded his audience of Waghers that there was unbroken friendship between the British Government and Baroda State, so that any misconduct would bring down upon them the full force of British arms. For the happy issue of those troublous years gratitude was due to 'the Lord God of Dwarka'.

In the world's perspective the rebellion of Okhamandal is but a speck, lost in the multitudinous events of which history takes note. It was but a far-off ripple of that great upheaval of the ocean bed which we call the Indian Mutiny. The weakness of the Baroda Government had no doubt induced the pirates and robbers to rebel, but the legend of the impotence of England, combined with the very partial success which had attended the attempts to quell previous risings, encouraged them to resist to the utmost. Very early in the long history of turbulence, Vithal Rao Diwanji had urged that a European officer should be stationed in Kathiawar, in order that the Waghers might obtain 'a more intimate knowledge of the British character, which does not easily relinquish what it has once undertaken to accomplish'. The British had fulfilled this flattering estimate. They had pacified Okhamandal, and now handed back to Baroda a comparatively peaceful population on whom the years between had wrought a great change. But if the Waghers were changed, so also was the Baroda Government. The wise reforms of the Maharaja had given it that character of efficiency which the Resident had generously acknowledged. It is possible that even Colonel Meade, when he took shy glances at rendition in 1905, did not sufficiently appreciate the great change which had come over Baroda in the course of thirty years. If the Waghers were troublesome it was because the Government was weak; would they venture to rebel again now that the Government was strong? The Maha-

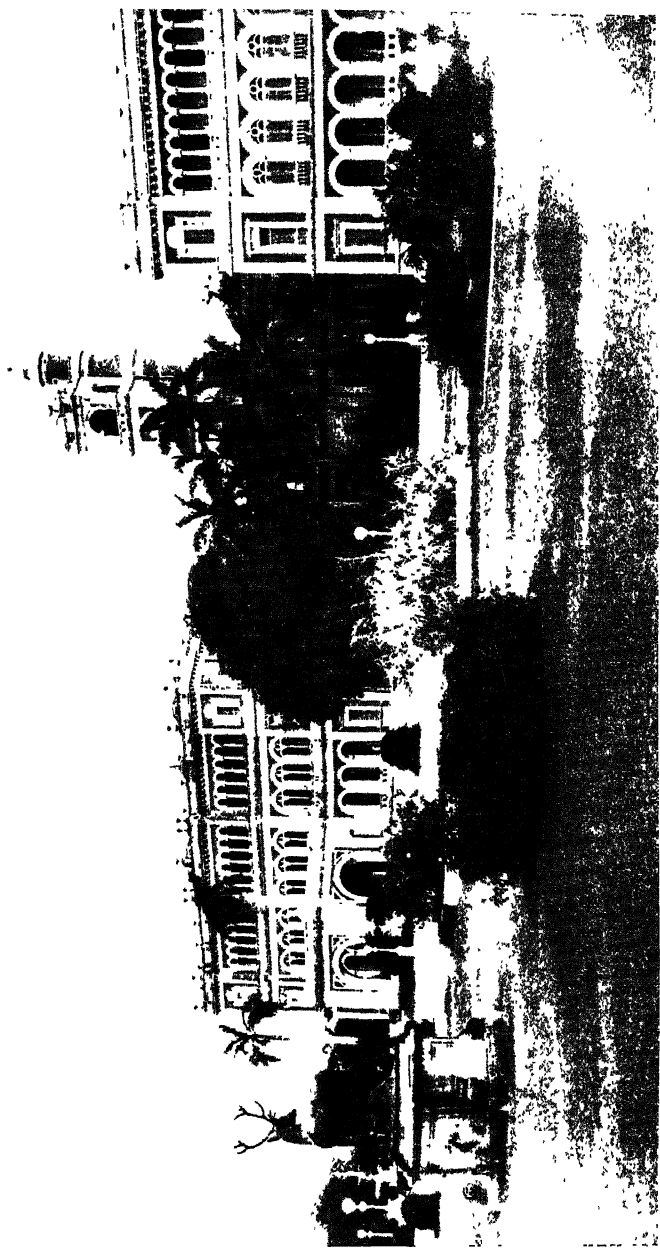
raja's unvarying dislike of Residency interference in matters which, in his view, concerned the Baroda Government alone, made him impatient of the prolonged control. But 'tout vient à point à qui sait attendre', and the Maharaja's ardent wish had come true. Henceforward he was free to carry out his schemes for the development of Okhamandal.

Chapter Fifteen

LATER REFORMS AND TOURS TO EUROPE

WHEN the force of the great famine of 1899-1900 was spent, the Maharaja, as we have seen, went to Europe with the double object of seeing the Maharani through a serious operation, and of taking his sons to school at Oxford. As soon as Her Highness was well enough to be left he went off to Scotland for a little shooting, and was delighted at bagging 'an eight-pointer stag, and three trouts'. The circle of his English friends was growing enormously. He was a welcome guest at Windsor Castle ('Her Majesty was very kind'), in London Society, at shooting-boxes in Scotland, and at country houses in England. The versatility of his mind fitted him for any role, and the enthusiastic interest which he took in European institutions begot an answering enthusiasm in his guides and preceptors. He was recognized to be, in patronizing phrase, an 'enlightened' Prince.

The next move was Germany. The Maharani was by this time convalescent, and it was thought advisable that she should go to some watering-place. At Wiesbaden he came across the Zander Institute for Swedish physical exercises, and instantly thought of Baroda: 'It may be too expensive to carry the whole to India, which would cost £2,000. But I have asked Dr. Batukram to give me an estimate of some of the instruments that may be useful in India.' The instruments have since been bought and set up in the hospital; the Zander institute itself is not yet built, but it remains on the programme to be undertaken when the many calls on the Baroda purse have been satisfied. The usual journey down the Rhine brought the party to Cologne, and by the middle of October they were in Paris. There he spent most of his time studying the



THE MAKARPURA PALACE
(The country residence of the Maharaja)

Exhibition, and found it 'very hard work'; he discussed it all with President Loubet, whom he found 'sensible and straightforward'. Here are the Maharaja's impressions of the Exhibition as he told them to a great audience in Ahmedabad in 1902:

'Two years ago I stood looking at the wonders of that great Exhibition in Paris which summed up in so striking a manner the progress of a century in civilization, industry, and commerce. If I were asked what struck me most in that noble and artistic effort of a great nation, I should answer: the magnificent proportions and excellent management of the undertaking, so vast in conception and admirable in execution: the efficiency of the orderly and illuminating arrangements, and careful accuracy of detail; and after that, the extraordinary ingenuity displayed in the educational section in methods and appliances: and not only the ingenuity but the thoroughness of these methods, especially in the exhibits of Germany and America. But besides these two special exhibits that which struck me most profoundly was the enormous difference between India and Europe to-day. Those vast halls crowded with shining steel work, the fruits of the combined industry and genius of a dozen nations; the amazing richness of texture and delicacy of design in the products of those machines; the vigorous life and aspiration which glowed in the Art, as well as the clear precision of the knowledge reflected in the Science: all this impressed me more than I can say.'¹

The theatre gave him some relaxation. Réjane in *Madame Sans-Gêne*, Coquelin in *Cyrano*, 'a play written by a young man who has become quite famous', and Bernhardt in the same young man's *L'Aiglon* gave him a dramatic feast which moved him to reflections:

'The French stage is famous. This is partly due to the systematic training of the actors—The consequence is that the general level of acting is high, higher than in England or the United States, for instance. Apart from this the artistic instincts

¹ *Speeches and Addresses*, vol. i, p. 83.

of the French are excellent. On the whole it may be said that the French stage influences all European countries and the United States, though of course there are local departures of value.’¹

Cyrano de Bergerac stirred somewhat deeper thoughts:

‘Three centuries ago there was a scope for the individual, which is now greatly restricted. It is hard now for the man to play a brilliant solo part. What we call “division of labour” has, with the increase of science and art, forced the individual to specialize his work, and also to make it dependent on the worth, force, and knowledge of others. We no longer see Poet Soldiers who are also Scientists. Each man gives himself up to a narrower pursuit, which to bear fruit requires the co-operation of others, themselves skilled in a separate narrow channel of learning or skill. The general result is greater for society at large. But, on the other hand, we have lost sight of the gloriously diversified lives of the great who flourished in the Renaissance or “fresh birth” of Europe, which succeeded the torpid centuries of what are called in Europe “The Middle Ages”.’¹

But the moral which he drew from *Cyrano* was not confined to Europe. His thoughts flew back to India, and he turned the light of his reflections on to her condition:

‘India has been long steeped in a kind of sleep of exhaustion. This stage will not be followed by a Renaissance of heroic individuals even if an awakening comes. From her “middle ages” we shall have to pass at once to a democratic or socialistic (call it what you will) stage. It is not therefore a number of self-contained great men we must hope to see spring up in India, splendid as such men are, but a rise in the level of society at large.’¹

A month in London, with flying visits to Chester and Oxford, and he was on his way to break fresh ground in Spain. The route followed was of the ordinary type—San Sebastian, Madrid, Toledo, Seville, Cordova, and

¹ Autograph Diary of the Maharaja.

Granada. At Madrid he had an interview with Queen Christina and the 'infant' King, and of course revelled in the Prado and Velazquez. But like many another traveller, he found Spain feckless and dirty, the Spaniards lazy and careless. He noticed the immense influence of the priests; and to the eye of the ruler the country seemed to be very badly managed. 'Corruption seems to be rampant, and the members of the Cortes and the different officials do not care to rectify these evils. They themselves are accused of participating in these misdoings.' Except for her great buildings—the cathedral at Toledo, the mosque at Cordova, the Giralda at Seville—there was little to attract and nothing to teach in the Spain of 1900.

He returned to India in the January of 1901, at the time when the death of Queen Victoria was announced. It was a great shock to all India, and to the Maharaja in particular, with whom the memories of her were quite fresh. But the world had to go on, and he was soon back at work. This time he was really glad to be once more in India. 'I never felt so happy to be back,'¹ he writes to Colonel Ravenshaw, the Resident. He had not been hampered in his movements; he had gone where he liked; he had come away when he liked, and he had been long enough away to content him. And so in renewed vigour he set to work. Vernacular schools, the Female Training School, the disposal of judicial cases, and the Widow Remarriage Act, trod on one another's heels in letters to the Dewan, and there were many other things to attend to.

He spent June in Naini Tal, and there he lost his Secretary, Mr. Newman. He had not been long in India, contracted enteric, and died in a few days. His sudden illness and death deeply moved the Maharaja, who treated him as his own son, spared no expense for him, and visited him in the hospital. When all was over, he arranged for

¹ *Selected Letters*, vol. i, p. 531, dated 15.1.1901.

a funeral with all possible honours, and walked all the way to the cemetery with the coffin: 'I do not think any Hindu Raja has done this before.'

II

It was curious that Lord Curzon, brilliantly gifted as he was, and capable of untiring energy, lacked the one thing so needful in India. His own biographer has said of him that 'his imagination, brilliant though it was in some directions, was not precisely of the kind which enabled him to put himself in other peoples' skins', and another critic, Sir Francis Younghusband, has remarked that 'he had not that quality of insight, that swift intuition, which could divine what was in the hearts and souls of peoples, what would satisfy their hopes and aspirations, what would bring them that contentment of soul which is their only true good';¹ and so with the best of intentions, in spite of an ardent patriotism, and through that patriotism of the most devoted work for India, he managed to offend everybody. He offended Sir Mackworth Young by his masterful handling of the question—his own question—of a North-West Frontier Province. He offended the army over the affair of the 9th Lancers. He offended the Civil Service by his superior ways. He offended Indians by tactless remarks, and he offended the Princes by treating them as his subordinates. When King Edward remonstrated with him on the wording of the famous Circular, he replied:

'He (Lord Curzon) cannot recall having spoken one hard word to a Chief since he has been in India. On the contrary, he has endeavoured to bring himself into personal contact with all the chiefs of every type and degree.'²

It was said in all sincerity. It was also true. Sir Sidney

¹ *Asiatic Review*, January 1929, p. 4.

² *King Edward VII*, by Sidney Lee, vol. ii, p. 365.

Lee declares that 'although with the greater number of Indian princes the Viceroy's relations were distinctly cordial, his relations with the Gaekwar of Baroda were by no means on such a happy footing, and provided one of the numerous matters of disagreement between the Viceroy and the Home Government'. That too is true—on the surface—but there was many a Prince who, openly cordial, resented in secret the behaviour of the imperious Viceroy, and who admired the courage of the Maharaja of Baroda. That last sentence of Sir Sidney's is revealing. The Home Government did not like it. The King did not like it. But Lord Curzon went on his way unmindful of Kings and Cabinets. He had said no hard word, but there are other ways of offending susceptibilities. In the words of the old song which are so often true :

It ain't so much the thing he sez
As the nasty way he sez it.

That is what he could not see. Everything was to be done his way, and if people did not like it, so much the worse for them. No man did more for India than Lord Curzon, and yet no Viceroy has left India so little regretted.

The Durbar of 1903 was his creation, and he toiled long and ardently to make it a complete success in every detail. It was, we are assured by the authority just quoted, 'an unqualified success. It was a solemn, impressive, and perhaps even a defiant manifestation of Imperial power.'¹ But in the hearts of the Princes rankled the sense of indignity. Lord Curzon had himself said that he was 'most anxious to provide that the Indian Princes should not be merely spectators at the ceremony as they were in 1877, but actors in it'. The idea from his point of view was unexceptionable. The Princes were to participate in the Empire; they were not to be set apart as if they did not

¹ Ibid., p. 367.

belong to India, but were foreign royalties, like the Amir of Afghanistan or the Shah of Persia; they were to join with British India in homage to the King-Emperor. The Princes were loyal to the King-Emperor with a passionate loyalty, and they felt that the occasion was not one for the personality of the Viceroy to be emphasized to the extent of almost overshadowing the real purpose of the Assemblage.

The particular points of difference were an elephant procession and the use of scarlet livery. Lord Curzon wished to arrange an elephant procession in which the Princes should take part, he himself being the central figure. He consulted the Princes. The Maharaja objected, and said so. The Resident, anxious to keep the peace, protested, but the Maharaja very reasonably replied not to the Resident, but to his own Minister:

‘His Highness has promised his reply with the hope that no harm or indignity would be offered if he freely expressed his views; but if indignity or insult is to be the lot of those who honestly give out their views when asked to do so, he would fain withdraw the letter, and give no reply at all.’¹

It was in his view ridiculous to construe an unwillingness to fall in with the Viceroy’s plans as a sign of disrespect to His Majesty. Nobody could be more anxious to avoid discourtesy to the King-Emperor, but if that was to be the view taken, why did they consult him at all?

‘It seems to him very hard that he should pretend to do willingly, spontaneously, and as if it were of his own accord, what is only forced upon him under the threat of insult,’¹ for it seems that those who refused to accept would somehow be degraded in the assignment of the seats. He would take part in the procession if he was forced to do so, but he could not pretend to like it. If the question of the procession touched the honour

¹ *Selected Letters*, vol. ii, No. 653, p. 469, dated 13.8.1902.

of the Princes, the question of the livery touched their pockets also. It is usual for the lower class of servants in Baroda to wear scarlet coats in the cold weather, but the scarlet coat is also a distinguishing badge of similar servants in attendance on the Viceroy, on Provincial Governors, and Members of the Councils. It is not very clear why the Viceroy wished to forbid the use of this livery by the Princes at the Durbar; probably it was for the practical reason that it was likely to cause confusion, but also for the sentimental one, that he alone as the representative of the King-Emperor, or at most the highest representatives of the ruling power, should be conspicuous by an entourage clothed in this striking colour. The Maharaja was not alone in protesting; he does not even seem to have been the first to protest. Not only was it humiliating to accept dictation on such a matter as this, but many Princes had recently spent large sums on this kind of uniform, and they did not see why they should spend a great deal more on another one.

The great Durbar of 1903 was conceived in a spirit of genuine patriotism. It was to be a national pageant, glorifying the King-Emperor, and uniting India with the Empire in a kind of thanksgiving service. It was to rival, and indeed to surpass, Lord Lytton's Durbar of 1877, when Queen Victoria was proclaimed Empress. But somehow the peculiar personality of the Viceroy managed to make itself felt, and there were not a few in India at the time who maliciously spoke of it as a glorification, not of King Edward, but of Lord Curzon. Nevertheless, though there were underground rumblings, the great Assembly buried its private irritations in a splendid demonstration of loyalty to the Throne. But the Maharaja, conscious of his own position and dignity, and always ready to do homage to the Sovereign, had no intention of doing homage to Lord Curzon. The Nizam

of Hyderabad approached, bowed, and passed on. The Maharaja of Baroda, who followed, felt that the occasion called for something more than mere formality. In the words of the official chronicle of the Durbar, 'he asked the Viceroy to convey to His Majesty the King-Emperor his hearty and loyal congratulations on his Coronation, and his good wishes for the New Year'.¹

III

The summer of 1903 was spent in Kashmir. The Maharaja was not well, and he felt that, in the interests both of himself and of his State, he ought to have gone to Europe. But the famous Circular stood in the way. He complained to Colonel Meade, the Resident, with whom he was on cordial terms, that he was compelled against his will to give up the idea of Europe, for 'it is still possible that the trip to Kashmir may fail of its object, and I may tell you once for all that I may be compelled to go any time on a sea voyage'.²

However, he made the best of his second best, and the Maharaja of Kashmir did all in his power to make the stay of his brother Prince comfortable. Kashmir was that year visited by an unprecedented flood, and the Maharaja requited the courtesy shown to him by giving a donation for the relief of those who had suffered. He was accompanied on this journey by Arobindo Ghose, who afterwards acquired fame, or rather notoriety, in the time of sedition, and who fled from vengeance, if not from justice, to Pondicherry. Some capital was afterwards made in those times of excitement of the Maharaja's acquaintance with this man, and with the notorious Krishnavarma. The latter he met casually in Europe,

¹ *The History of the Delhi Coronation Durbar*. By Stephen Wheeler. (John Murray.) 1904.

² *Selected Letters*, vol. ii, No. 710, p. 524, dated 1.5.1903.

and it was easy to disprove any kind of intimacy; indeed, Krishnavarma himself denied it publicly. Arobindo Ghose was a brilliant man. He was at the time using his talents in the service of Baroda College, and it was not for many years, and long after he had left Baroda, that he developed the tendencies which brought him before the public and drove him from British India. At the time of the Kashmir visit he was a harmless secretary, and probably a very efficient one.

The year 1904 saw a distinct advance in self-government. For a long time past the Maharaja had considered the introduction of the elective principle, and as we have already seen, he had insisted upon it for the village Councils. He has always identified himself with his people; he has always looked upon society as a whole as the human body is a whole; if the Raja is unquestionably the head, others represent the limbs, and the organs without which the body cannot function. As early as 1892 he had said:

‘It is the co-operation of my people which I require to gain for them the advantages of physical health. Some simple book learning, therefore, I wish the masses to acquire that I may take them into my confidence and partnership.’¹

And many years afterwards, in a speech which expressed a life-long conviction, he said:

‘The British Government in India requires the help and co-operation of the most talented sons of the country in the task of administration and legislation, and it is to-day welcoming to a larger extent such help and co-operation. This is a wise policy fraught with great results in the future. I believe the best form of Government is Government through the people themselves. . . . The people should be trained to look after their own concerns to a greater extent. . . . A sense of responsibility must be ingrained within the people: they have to be taught to

¹ *Speeches and Addresses*, vol. i, p. 31.

know what is good for them and how to secure it; and this can be effected only by education and by long experience in administrative work.¹

In 1904 he began to put these principles into practical shape. After long discussion the State Legislative Assembly, known as the Dhara Sabha, came to birth four years later. It is purely advisory, and, like all advisory bodies, there is an air of unreality in its proceedings which has called forth strong criticism from the local Press. What is the good, they ask, of passing a number of resolutions of which nobody takes any notice? What is the use of making long speeches to which the Government listen with bored politeness, with their minds already made up to do nothing? The air is full of cries to admit the people to a more real share in the administration; but it is here, and not in the Dhara Sabha, that the unreality is most apparent. It is the duty of an Opposition to oppose; it is the duty of the leaders to criticize, and in a party Government the rabid partisan will see no good in an opponent. But when a Government is not by party, and when the self-constituted or acknowledged leaders of opinion can see nothing good in anything that is done, the thought will come that, perhaps after all, they are sacrificing sincerity to an ideal, and that their denunciations are only meant to be used as pawns in the game of ultimate democracy. But the Dhara Sabha—the unofficial part of it—is elected, and if the Government do not always accept resolutions, the opinions of the members are not without weight. It often happens indeed that the members, not aware of what is going on in the Council, recommend a line of action which is already being taken, or suggest a new point of view which has to be considered; in any case, all legislation is presented to the popular

¹ *Speeches and Addresses*, vol. i, p. 240.

Assembly, select committees are formed, and only after their report does the Act take its final shape. That is surely a great advance upon the time when the law was imposed upon the people from without at the will of the Prince, even upon the time when bills were published for criticism. For it usually happens that when public criticism is invited, nobody bothers to criticize, unless the Bill in question has caught the popular imagination. Once again impatience wants to hurry, but the Maharaja bides his time; he is not to be hustled into premature action by popular clamour.

In the following year the Department of Commerce and Industries was organized. The Maharaja regarded an industrial revival as one of India's greatest hopes for the future—an industrial revival which should be based upon general education. That went without saying. Nor was he under the delusion that State agency could really create an industry, as the Maharaja of Gwalior seems to have been, with disappointing effects to his State.¹ The Maharaja began in a spirit of enthusiasm, but with characteristic prudence he soon found that State-run factories are a mistake. Nor was he ashamed to confess his failure. He spoke frankly enough:

'My experience teaches me that it is very difficult for Government to provide industries for its people in the absence of a real business spirit amongst the people themselves. It is very difficult for so impersonal an entity as Government to get capable managers or to supervise its enterprises properly. I have tried various measures in my own State, but I am sorry to say that the results are disappointing. A sugar mill, a cotton mill, and an ice factory were tried, but were not a success. A State fund for the advance of capital, and other assistance to manufacturers, also failed. I found that the managers were not sufficiently interested in the scheme, and not impartial in the working of it.

¹ *Madhav Rao Sindia of Gwalior*, by Bull and Haksar, p. 155.

I am convinced, however, that the fault lay not with the industries themselves, but in the fact that they were State enterprises.¹

Even the official record, anxious to say all it can, admits that the record 'is a poor one', though there are hopes for the future. But the Maharaja was quite right. In the absence of a real business spirit, and with State enterprise ruled out of court, you cannot expect industries to flourish. All that the State can do is to help—and then only with discrimination, for bounty-fed industries, which would otherwise collapse, are merely hot-house plants. There has been some response to the Maharaja's activities, though it is but a faint one; and no such scheme as the State Trust of Gwalior has been launched in Baroda. The truth is that both Baroda and Gwalior are agricultural States. There is no town outside Baroda City which is larger than an ordinary market-town in England, and there is no place which is truly urban in character. Factories there are here and there, and local industries, but a cotton mill here, and a carving industry there, do not go far to build up the industrial wealth of a people. Baroda is too unfortunately situated for industrial enterprise. To the south lies the city of Bombay, prosperous—until recently at any rate—in its many factories and its splendid out-turn; to the north, between two fractions of the Baroda State, is Ahmedabad, the second city of the Bombay Province, and second also in industrial undertaking. Between two such centres an agricultural State has little chance in industrial development.

But the Maharaja was not thinking of his State alone. Baroda might be the field of his personal activities, but it was only one small part of his great ideal of national unity and national prosperity. He was never tired of

¹ *Speeches and Addresses*, vol. i, p. 108.

preaching that national progress must proceed upon sound economics, and that sound economics could only be studied in the West, which had made a special study of economic problems, and had reduced them to a scientific system. Learn from the West: that was the burden of his cry. Cut yourselves adrift from all those cults of superstition, and from all those antiquated and outworn customs, which hamper your economic advance. Do not adhere to the belief that your country is incomparably the best in the world, but try to make it so, so that all the world may acknowledge it.

'India', he said, 'needs a great national movement in which each man will work for the nation and not for himself, or for his caste, a movement carried out on common-sense lines. It does not mean that we are to adopt a brand-new system from Europe, but it does mean that we must borrow a little common sense in our solutions of the problems of life. We must resolutely see what we need, and if we find a plain and satisfactory solution, adopt it whether we have traditional authority for it or not. . . . We have our "*ancien régime*" of custom and prejudice to overcome: let us meet them by a new Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity—a Liberty of action, an Equality of opportunity, and the Fraternity of a great national ideal. Then you may hope to see India a nation again, with a national art, and a national literature, and a flourishing commerce, and then, but not till then, may you demand a national government.'¹

Much of what he then said is coming true. The old prejudice against crossing the seas is wearing very thin, if it has not quite disappeared. Economics are becoming a favourite study. Business men go to Europe and serve their apprenticeship there in business concerns, and when the time comes, send their sons to Europe to study the foundations of their own success. The larger centres are full of men who have built up their business upon the solid rock of sound science and sound brains. And

¹ Ibid., vol. i, pp. 115-16.

if in the rural parts, as in Baroda State, there do not seem to be signs of real progress, that is because the permeation of ideas is a geological process. Impatience wants to observe the march of a glacier.

IV

In March 1905 the Maharaja started on a tour which turned out to be the longest he has ever undertaken. He began with Paris, and went on to London, where he went to the King's garden-party and the Harrow speech-day, and otherwise spent his time in the usual round of social functions and private entertainments. In August he was in Switzerland, and then began a sort of will-o'-the-wisp tour, bewildering to the reader and hard to follow. First the Tyrol with visits to Meran and Bozen, where he attended a congress of German doctors. It was typical of the Maharaja's insatiable desire to learn that he should have attended a meeting at which he did not understand a word of the spoken language. The substance of the President's speech was, however, explained to him, and then finding that there was nothing to be got out of the Congress on such conditions he came away. Next Munich, where he stayed for nearly a fortnight, crowding into each day as much as would satisfy the most ravenous of American tourists, but with far more appreciation. Dresden and Berlin followed, and on the 6th December he was in Rome. Florence, Turin, Geneva, Montreux, tumbled over one another in hot haste, and on Boxing Day he was at Caux. There and at Territet he took breath, passing the time quietly in the Swiss mountains. In April he was back again in Paris, with a dash to Madrid to see a bull-fight. And so again to London. In 1905 the Maharaja was in his 43rd year—in the prime of life, and his energy seemed to be indomitable. To-day it was a castle, to-morrow a picture gallery; the day after

some factory or other, or it might be a national fête. Whatever there was to see he was determined to see it; whatever there was to hear or to learn, he was not going to miss his chance. Nor was he indifferent to Nature. On Monday he would be driving over the Stelvio Pass; on Wednesday a climb to the top of a glacier to see the view; on Friday travelling in the train, observing the country as he went along. Truly one may say that if rest was what he was seeking he sought it in movement.

In the spring of 1906 he was off to America. The American Ambassador in London wrote to a friend in Washington commending him and the Maharani, who were on their way home via San Francisco and the Pacific. That, however, turned out to be a mistake, though possibly it may have been the intention at the moment.

‘His Highness’, wrote Mr. Whitelaw Reid, ‘is very desirous of seeing what he can of the workings of our republican institutions and you will find both him and the Maharani intelligent and delightful people.’¹

And writing in similar strain to the State Secretary and the President of Harvard, he added the desire especially to see the educational institutions of America as one of the principal objects of the visit. This tour—the first in America—was not without results for Baroda. The earlier months spent in Europe were more or less of a holiday; the visit to America, as was fitting, seeing what America is, should be a business visit, and accordingly he settled down to work. His first request was for an ‘expert manufacturer or a person competent to explore a country, who after studying the natural conditions and facilities, as well as past and present history and political circumstances of the State and people, should be competent enough to recommend definite lines of policy to be

¹ Whitelaw Reid to State Secretary, dated 2.5.1906.

followed by the State'.¹ The nature of the policy to be thus recommended by this paragon was not explained; apparently it was connected with the schemes for industrial development. At the same time he asked for an educational expert; and he followed up both requests with another for a 'good instructive note on citizenship, its duties and obligations, and the historical treatment of citizenship'.² And again, writing from Colorado Springs about a fortnight later, he asked for chapters or pamphlets on (1) the Industrial Development of the United States, and the policy followed to encourage it, with statistics of exports and imports, (2) Education in the States, (3) Agriculture, (4) the bringing up of children, and their relations with their parents 'when they grow up', (5) Labour Unions. But the scheme which bore the most fruit was the scheme for libraries, the story of which has been told elsewhere. The Maharaja's confidant, on whom these burdens were laid, was further asked to read the rules drafted for circulating libraries, and to suggest alterations. But all this activity, all this concentration of the mind upon questions ultimately connected with Baroda, is reflected, possibly with more lasting results, in the letters to the Dewan written from Philadelphia and Colorado Springs. Was the education of the lowest classes properly attended to? His Highness had heard of a case in which a low-caste man had been sentenced to imprisonment for two years for getting into the Palace at the time of the Ganapati festival. Was that right? And could the Minister start a flour mill, to be managed by the public? And what about the delay in Judicial cases? And again, when he returned to London in August, and looking out at Hyde Park from the rooms of the hotel, reflected on the English love of country, and the way they brought it into

¹ *Selected Letters*, vol. ii, No. 834, p. 622, dated 3.6.1906.

² *Ibid.*, vol. ii, No. 835, p. 623, dated 6.6.1906.

the city, would it not, he asked, be a good thing to arrange to lay out squares in the more congested parts of Baroda, 'where people may resort for recreation, and pass their leisure hours to the great advantage of their health?'¹

All this seems to have been set in motion by the visit to America, though it did not immediately arise out of it. What exactly he found in America which he could not find in England, or why he went to America to find it, is not very clear. This much at any rate is certain, that the successful library scheme was set going by an American, on American lines, and Prince Jaisinh Rao went to Harvard, where he acquired a pronounced American accent.

But the time was getting on, and he had to be returning to India. He wrote to Lord Morley, then at the India Office, for an appointment to say good-bye. Here is Lord Morley's own account of the interview:

'The Guicowar made a point, for some reason to me inscrutable, of paying me a farewell visit at my own house instead of here. Curzon Wyllie was rather against it, and thought the red carpets of this Office, on mighty occasions, have a real though occult virtue in them. However, little as you might think it, my motto is "anything for a quiet life", so the potentate came to my Tusculan villa at Wimbledon. I explained to him how sorry I was not to have twenty-one guns, though I have a six-chambered revolver for suburban burglars. I wondered what all the Saints and sages on my bookshelves would think of the Oriental taking five-o'clock tea, and home-made bread and butter among them. Well, I did not let the host displace the minister, and I gave him some paternal admonition on his prolonged absence from his State.'²

And he went no doubt to the India Office next day, well pleased with his wit, his philosophic reflections, and the

¹ Ibid., vol. ii, No. 841, p. 630, dated 6.8.1906.

² Morley, *Recollections*, vol. ii, p. 187.

discharge of his duty! And this was diplomacy! this was the man who, from his comfortable doctrinaire seat in the India Office, was telling less fortunate countrymen to 'get into their skins'. Here was a unique example of fatuous self-complacency. One pictures the scene, the Maharaja, somewhat conscious of his dignity, and proud of the fact that he then shared with two others the highest salute accorded to any Indian Prince, being greeted by a would-be genial Secretary of State with a silly, elephantine joke about revolvers and suburban burglars—the genial Secretary, wondering what he ought to do with the 'Oriental potentate' who seemed so out of place among the Ciceros and Dantes, Menanders and Homers, the Burkes, Voltaires, Diderots, Hugos, and the rest that crowded his scholarly shelves; the 'Oriental potentate' inwardly somewhat disgusted at this flippant reception in the true Macaulay manner, but outwardly courteous as an Oriental Prince would be. Can we be surprised if the paternal lecture fell a bit flat; or if the Maharaja left the 'Tusculan villa' with the impression that the Indian States did not loom very large in the eyes of a Liberal Secretary of State? Or perhaps not. Possibly the Maharaja with his usual common sense merely laughed at the clumsiness of a philosopher who, steeped to the lips in Europe, had had neither the time nor the inclination for Asia, and to whom, therefore, Asiatics were an unopened book. Possibly the paternal advice was put away to be used if conscience so suggested. The sequel showed how far the winged shaft went home.

V

After the Maharaja's return the State added yet another to its pioneer enterprises. The Bank of Baroda was founded in 1908. With all his enthusiasm for industrial progress upon Western lines, the Maharaja was fully alive to the

economic truth that sound industrialism must go hand in hand with sound finance. In 1875 the state of the Baroda currency was to the mind of Sir Madhav Rao deplorable. The imperfections of the mint were so great that the design varied from coin to coin; sometimes the whole design appeared, sometimes a part only, and not always the same part. In the absence of milling, the coins could easily be filed, and there was no system of calling in under-weight coins, of testing, or of cutting them. Forgery was rampant; counterfeits were not easily detected, and the unstable coinage varied from day to day in relation to the British rupee. Sir Madhav Rao was so impressed with the urgent necessity of the reform of the currency, that he started corresponding with the Government of India. He assumed that by transferring the mint to the Imperial Government, there would be a profit, and he therefore wished to make it a condition that the Indian Government would suitably compensate Baroda for the privilege thus surrendered. The Finance Secretary, however, anticipated that there would be no such profit, and declined to compensate; whereupon Sir Madhav Rao somewhat unaccountably, since he had described the situation as desperate, abandoned the whole idea; it was, however, his excuse that being a trustee for the minor Maharaja, he had not complete liberty of action. The question cropped up spasmodically. Baroda built a new mint and imported machinery from England, and in 1889 it was resolved to continue the Baroda coinage on a more satisfactory basis. In 1892 another effort was made to revive the question, but nothing was done until 1897, when the drop in the exchange value of the Baroda rupee alarmed the authorities. The matter was now taken up in earnest by one of the ablest of the Dewans, Srinivasa Raghava Aiyangar; and eventually it was notified, in August 1900, that British Indian silver coinage should be

substituted for Baroda coinage for a period of fifty years. It was not until this highly complicated and difficult subject was thus satisfactorily settled that a scheme for a Bank upon Western principles could be worked out. The Maharaja long revolved it in his mind; he took courage and counsel, and it finally emerged in the Bank of Baroda. So unaccustomed were the people to modern banking methods that they were with difficulty persuaded to accept notes, and confidence was only established when they found that the paper money could be exchanged for silver, and that for practical purposes the one was as good as the other. The Bank Manager explained to the Maharaja the working of the institution. It is to be remembered that the financial affairs of a Prince are carried on by the officers of the Household. The Bank under the guidance of Mr. C. E. Randle, the original Manager, has flourished exceedingly. It began with an authorized capital of 60 lakhs, of which 30 lakhs were called up, and has now a reserve of over 23 lakhs, with branches in Bombay, Ahmedabad, Surat, and Bhavnagar, as well as in about a dozen outlying places in the Raj.

The Maharaja opened the Bank on the 9th July 1908. He returned to his old theme of the need for scientific industry, and explained to his people the object with which the Bank was founded. The State—the Government—did not need it, though it would very likely be useful to it:

‘The primary object is to satisfy a demand which the people themselves have made upon us from time to time for such a financial institution of their own. Government has therefore left the management of the Bank to a private corporation, withholding its hand from any official interference with the operations.’¹

¹ *Speeches and Addresses*, vol. i, p. 222.

And he exhorted the Directors to show themselves worthy of his trust. Once the confidence and co-operation of the people were gained, there was no reason why 'it should not become the forerunner of many agencies of a popular nature for the spread of commercial and industrial prosperity'.¹

Some months after this the Dewan, Kersaspji Dada-
chanji, a Parsi as his name implies, retired after five years
of able and faithful service in the post. He was succeeded
by Mr. Romesh Chunder Dutt, who had before served for
two years in the State—an eminent Bengali who had the
distinction of being the first Indian to rise to the post of
Divisional Commissioner in his own province of Bengal,
and has since become known both by his condensed
verse renderings of the great Indian epics, the Ramayana
and the Mahabharata, and by his strenuous advocacy of
a permanent land settlement on the Cornwallis plan. But
the bright hopes which his appointment had roused were
not destined to be fulfilled. Arriving in June, he died sud-
denly in November of the same year. It was a great blow
to the State that a man of his reputation and ability should
have been taken from it before he had time to make his
presence felt. The events of 1908 had profoundly stirred
British India. Violent speeches and articles in Bengal had
culminated in the murder of two ladies at Mozafferpur,
and 'scarcely a month and often not a week passed with-
out adding to the tale of outrages'.² The Indian Public
Prosecutor was shot in February 1909, and a Musalman
Inspector of Police about a year later in the High Court.
Only two months or a little more before Dutt's death, the
Maharaja had asked him to prepare a full statement of all
seditious occurrences in the State and the steps taken to
suppress them, so that it might be used in the Maharaja's

¹ *Speeches and Addresses*, vol. i, p. 222.

² *Indian Unrest*, by Sir Valentine Chirol, p. 97.

reply to Lord Minto. The letter was sent, but death intervened, and the task of dealing with sedition was left to the new Dewan, Mr. C. N. Seddon.

The Maharaja pronounced the funeral oration of his dead Dewan, and he spoke in terms of generous appreciation:

'Such a man as Mr. Dutt has an influence on society of the deepest value. His strength of character and high sense of duty are incentives to others to follow the same ideals, with the result that the whole tone of the society of which he was a member is improved, uplifted. No one could come into contact with him without being struck by his intense unselfishness, his energetic application to his work at the expense of health itself. His tolerance of opinions antagonistic to his own, his hatred of bigotry and faction, his constant appeals on behalf of unity of action, his catholic sympathies, his moderation in the expression of his own ideas, his patience under criticism, all went to uplift society, to give it higher ideals, to broaden its views. . . . In him India has lost a great patriot and leader, and every Indian individually has lost a staunch and fearless supporter of his rights and claims, so far as they were based on justice.'¹

He confessed to his own sense of personal loss: 'I feel his loss immensely,' he said publicly, and in a private letter, 'He was the man after my own heart. I expected to do much with the advantage of his experience and ability.'² Shortly before this sad event Lord Minto, to whose visit reference has already been made, had come and gone with the usual pageantry and exchange of compliments, to which, however, special point was lent by the dastardly attempt on the life of the Viceroy when he was driving through the streets of Ahmedabad only a few days before. And so 1909 melted into 1910, which held in its hidden hand such a tragic gift for the English people. The time approached for the Maharaja to leave

¹ *Speeches and Addresses*, vol. i, pp. 254-6.

² *Selected Letters*, vol. ii, No. 873, dated 8.12.1909.

Baroda, to begin a series of travels that have gone on almost uninterruptedly, save for the war years, ever since. This time, however, he looked East and not West, and in the spring of 1910 he cast anchor in the harbour of Penang.

VI

This tour was the most ambitious that the Maharaja had undertaken, for although he left New York on the 13th July, and spent the rest of the time in England and France, by the time he reached Baroda again he had travelled round the world. At Penang, where he landed after the manner of ship's passengers eager for relief from the ennui of the voyage, he seems to have been struck mainly by the beauty of the vegetation, the fine broad streets, and the calves of the Chinese rickshaw coolies. At Singapore the ship stayed a little longer. He wrote to Mr. Seddon:

'Penang and Singapore were places of great vegetation, where the pine-apple, jack-fruit, mangosteen, and other tropical fruits and plants grow in abundance. . . . There are many Chinese, Madrasis, Javanese, and men from Bombay side to be seen here engaged in driving a lucrative trade. . . . The town has fine roads with avenues of fine trees. The water supply is copious and the reservoirs are a sight to see: they are approached by beautiful walks and drives, and surrounded by a forest of rich foliage of variegated tints. . . . It is really wonderful how enterprising and intelligent rulers can be the cause of turning wild forests and groups of huts into rich and flourishing cities.'¹

The staff found Hongkong rather dull, but the Maharaja was here able to get some information about opium, the stoppage of which in his State has always rankled. Sir Frederick (now Lord) Lugard, of African fame, told him that the attempt to check opium-eating was a mistake, forced upon him by the Home Government. Nations

¹ Ibid., vol. ii, No. 913, p. 661, dated 25.4.10.

have their vices, and by depriving the people of the opium for eating, we were only pushing them into habits of opium-smoking, cocaine, and alcoholic liquor. The Indian imports were but a fraction of the consumption, but the Governor admitted that the Chinese themselves were anxious to put a stop to the use of opium. The Maharaja records the conversation without comment. Flying visits to Macao and Canton, visits to curio shops, and a dinner with a Chinese gentleman filled the time; and his Chinese host, who had been to Europe, explained to him how young China was deteriorating in filial reverence and in honesty. Did his thoughts run to India for comparison? The record is silent. But the stay had not been without its annoyance. The Maharaja was not feeling well, and his staff had been wanting: 'I have more than enough officers, but not intelligent or energetic enough to think for themselves. . . . To have such men is worse than waste of money.' And again: 'Nimbalkar (the A.D.C.) has gone to lunch with the Admiral without leave. Very characteristic.'¹ After touching at Shanghai, where the Indian community welcomed the Maharaja, the party arrived at Kobe on the last day of April. Exactly a month was spent in Japan. The country, 'not so green as England nor so grand and wide as Kashmir', did not impress him as much as the inhabitants, who made use of every inch of ground, and who organized everything without fuss, and in perfect taste. Yokohama, Miyanoshita, Kyoto followed in rapid succession, and it was at Kyoto that news came of King Edward's death, which plunged the Empire into mourning. Much as he enjoyed the country and admired the people, he did not think he was receiving the attention that was his due. 'All Governors', he says, 'have sent some excuse'; and at Osaka he had to exchange hats with his Secretary,

¹ Autograph Diary.

because 'the Government of the country has never told me what to expect in the way of reception', and he found that he was not suitably dressed for the occasion. At Kyoto he was specially interested in a school 'where the Buddhist religion is taught' with other liberal education. 'I wanted to see this', he remarks rather enigmatically, 'as I want to start a similar school in Baroda.' At Nagoya, however, where he went to the exhibition and found the arrangements defective, he decided that 'the people are yet more ignorant than they look from their European dress'.

At Tokyo he was much impressed by Count Okuma, who as a boy of 15 might have seen the fateful entrance of Perry's ship into Japanese waters, and as a man had witnessed the emergence of Japan from her self-imposed seclusion of 250 years. 'A man of character and determination, with plenty of wisdom'—that was how he struck the Maharaja; a man who had not been too proud to learn what was best in other countries, while clinging to what was good in his own; a man, in short, who was the embodiment of what the Maharaja had so long been preaching to his own countrymen, the authentic example of his own ideal. A slight misunderstanding arose with the British Embassy. The Maharaja had not called at Yokohama, and the British Ambassador, Sir Claude Macdonald, having heard something to the effect that he had quarrelled with the British, thought that the slight was intentional. The matter was easily explained, but one gathers that the visit was not too cordial. In fact the Ambassador had no idea what sort of a Prince the Maharaja might be. But all was well that ended well; the British Ambassador had had no instructions from the Government of India, but when the call had been made, he reported the Maharaja's arrival to the Court, and from that time he was treated as the guest of the Emperor.

On the 16th May he went to spend a day in a Japanese house to see what it was like. Dinner was served *à la Japonaise*, and the Maharaja quaintly remarks that 'English food was served at the end to avoid starvation'.

'Bedsteads were not to be found : slept on the floor. Japanese pillows rather hard were given us : for blanket, kimonos stuffed with cotton were at our disposal. The sleeves ought to be very comfortable on a cold night.'

He noticed that in Japan, as in India, the educated classes live two lives—one in private, and the other in public, the first in Japanese, and the other in Western style—even going to the length of dividing their houses between the two. That is not uncommon in India; of the Maharaja himself, it would perhaps be more correct to say that he combines the two. If he wears trousers he also wears the Maratha cap; if his coat has tails *à l'Occidentale*, it is cut high to the neck in modern Eastern fashion. If he greets his European friends with the traditional handshake, he greets his Indian friends with the Eastern salaam. These things are typical. The Maharaja, as has already been said, claims to stand in the gap between East and West, and he lives up to the character in small things as well as great.

After an excursion to Nikko, and more Japanese dinners, 'which take a very long time . . . more than two hours', and which apparently (in conjunction with *sake*) showed off the Japanese *joie de vivre*, the Maharaja went to the Imperial Palace for an interview. He records his impressions :

'At 10 in the morning visited the Emperor and the Empress, both of whom looked rather old and shaky. The visit was done standing, which Sir Claude said was the invariable custom of the Court. There was a good deal of waiting about at the waiting-room and the corridor. I did not enjoy the visit, which was unnecessarily stiff. They (the Emperor and

Empress) have not yet got the ease and polish of manner of the West.' ¹

But he had satisfied his curiosity, and that was what he went for. Various excursions followed, among them Matsushima and Kamakura to see the famous statue of Buddha, which the Maharaja found to be smaller than the one at Nara. By this time all was going well; the Governors no longer had excuses; the magic key of the Embassy report had opened the doors of Japanese courtesy. The Maharaja gave a farewell dinner-party to Japanese officials, and made a short speech; on the 1st June he took a cordial farewell of Sir Claude and Lady Macdonald as well as of the officers of the Japanese Government, and at Yokohama of Viscount Inaba, who was in attendance up to the last moment on behalf of the Imperial Government.

VII

The Pacific behaved as a well-conducted ocean should. Honolulu was reached without adventure. The Maharaja landed and drove about the island, which struck him as 'beautiful with its smooth green lawns and palms, and other foliage besides its wooden villas'. But there was no time to see much. The ship moved on, and on the 17th June dropped anchor in San Francisco harbour. The Maharaja's first experiences were not prepossessing. He was pestered by a crowd of inquisitive newspaper reporters who annoyed him with 'worthless questions', and who seemed to him vulgar and mannerless, in search of sensational news to be served up to a sensation-loving public, and while pretending to dislike or to despise social distinctions, in their hearts adoring nothing so much as a Raja. He put them off, gave them an appointment at the hotel, and was relieved when only three of the more respectable appeared, the rest having thought

¹ Autograph Diary.

better of it. One can sympathize with his feelings, even though one may not be a lion, and the Maharaja is not the first to complain of the rank and file of the American Press. It may, however, be that he was unusually irritable as he was out of sorts for the moment.

On the last day of his stay at San Francisco he received a deputation of Indian students, who complained that they were looked down upon in California, partly, it would seem, because they were identified with Punjabi labourers who were dirty, drunk, and generally misbehaved. The Maharaja evidently thought that these young men were not of the right type to command respect in a foreign country. They were neither intelligent nor shrewd. They had little command of English, and some of them had no education to speak of. They had come as labourers, but had been persuaded to abandon manual work for study, and having very little money, had to support themselves by doing odd jobs. What that meant Mr. Dhan Mukerji has told us:

"I sought out a Hindu student, who told me to go and get a job. . . . I asked him what kind of a job. He said, "Dish washing, taking care of the house—anything. Go and ring the bell of every house until you find a job." So I went on ringing door-bell after door-bell. From each opening door came a "No, thank you," in tones running the whole scale from the snarl of a tiger to the smile of a lady. But at last I reached a house where they asked, "What can you do?" "Anything," I said—"Washing dishes—taking care of the house." "Can you begin to-morrow?" the lady asked me. I replied that I could, but I must first find lodging for the night. "May I come to you?" I politely inquired. In a very businesslike way she replied, "All right. Your room will be ready in the back yard."'¹

In such circumstances it was not very surprising that they were not held in high estimation, but the Californians,

¹ *Caste and Outcast*, by Dhan Mukerji, p. 160.

like the South Africans, until Mr. Srinivasa Sastri had shown them what an Indian can be, and some of them had seen India for themselves, were apt to judge the whole nation by these few stranded derelicts and their drunken Punjabi confrères. But the Maharaja hardly regarded the San Franciscans as angels for their part, for he thought them ready for any sharp practice, and not very honest. 'They abet each other,' he says, 'and threaten people if anybody outdoes them,' and he adds pertinently, 'Is this liberty?'

After this salutary lesson to keep their eyes open, the party arrived at Seattle, where they stayed for two days, and then went on to Vancouver. Journeying across Canada, he noticed the progressive character of the country, where thriving towns were growing up, and were taking, or would soon take, the place of the log cabins. A halt at Toronto gave the party the chance to see Niagara, but what struck the Maharaja more apparently than the grandeur of the Falls, which he saw as it was growing dark, was the number of trees and woods which he passed on the way. His thoughts flew back to Gujerat and Baroda, and he wished that they too might be even as this was.

New York was reached on the 10th July. The 'cool, fashionably dressed' but very ill-mannered men and women mistook them for gipsies, according to the imaginative New York reporter, and two women, with even worse manners, drew their skirts aside for fear of contamination by the 'gipsies' hand luggage. The women of America frankly disappointed the Maharani, who was characteristically outspoken. She had heard so much about them. They equalled the French in chic and vivacity, dressed better than the English, were more frankly coquettish than the Spanish, and were as fascinating as the most fascinating people in the world—the Russians.

'Well, they are not,' she said. 'They are less chic than the French women, because their clothes are more exaggerated, less becoming, and not always appropriate to the occasion. . . . They dress better than the English women. More conspicuously, perhaps, but their clothing is not so durable, suggests nothing of the solid qualities of modesty and station as do the tweeds and broad clothes worn by the English. Their coquetry is not attractive, for it possesses no subtlety. The manner of the American woman who wishes to attract a man is that of the boy who wants to play golf with him—as frank, as devoid of poetry.'¹

There was nothing feminine about the women except their clothes. She was annoyed at some of the questions asked of her. Some wanted to know if she was an East Indian, a West Indian, or an American—presumably Red—Indian! Others would like to know whether Bombay was in Baroda or Baroda in Bombay. The Maharaja had come to America to study the system of education.

Nor were their street manners any more pleasing. 'They are vulgar,' declared Her Highness. 'Else why should they stare at me on the streets as they do at the tigers in a circus parade, merely because I wear different and more reasonable garments than their own?' The women of America had not impressed the Maharaja on his previous visit, and with the facility of a High Court Judge the Maharani concurred. But all America was not like that, and the correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph* reported that New York had received the Maharaja with open arms, and paid him what was doubtless the particular compliment of calling him the 'Roosevelt of India'. The Pressmen of America had at least this advantage over their sisters, that they did not quarrel over the debatable point whether the Maharani was a Red Indian squaw or a West Indian beauty, but really admired and duly

¹ 'How the American Women disappointed me,' article in *San Francisco California Examiner*, 11th September 1910, by Her Highness the Maharani Saheb.

recorded 'their soft English voices, their native dress, their graceful carriage, their perfect sense of repose'. And so, on the 13th July, he left New York with mixed feelings—feelings of goodwill to the country he had conquered, and feelings of dislike for what he could not approve in American life.

He returned to London, and appropriately enough had tea and a talk with Mr. Whitelaw Reid, the American Ambassador. The imagination of the gossiping papers of England ran riot—why, it is not clear, seeing that he had been in London at least half a dozen times before; perhaps the fame of the Japanese-American tour had gone abroad. He had come on a State visit to the King, whatever that might mean; he had brought presents to His Majesty of fabulous value; he heated with electricity a Palace that in the Baroda climate is not easily kept cool; he rode a thing impressively called a 'golden chariot'; he slept on a bed of solid gold; he possessed gold and silver artillery, referring to the folly of Maharaja Khande Rao and Malhar Rao without mention of the fact that His Highness has got one gun in each precious metal, which he keeps as curiosities and heirlooms; and he has a necklace worth so many millions. There was foundation in fact for most of this description of splendour which might have made the Queen of Sheba faint, but it was not for that kind of thing that the Maharaja would like to be known. He is, of course, a rich man, through the careful administration of his money, but all this twaddle about gold and silver and guns meant nothing to him compared with his reputation as a wise and capable administrator. The reporters seemed surprised that after so many visits to Europe the Maharaja could talk fluent English; and he had to explain that he had not come on a State visit to the King, nor were his hands full of rich presents, neither had he come to consult the Secretary of State

about affairs. One lady's paper crowned all these rather vulgar absurdities by calling him 'the Maharaja of Gaek-war'. The poor lady had not consulted an atlas.

The time in London was spent, as usual, in social entertainments, including an audience of Their Majesties and a visit to the Secretary of State, on which latter occasion the indefatigable reporter duly noticed the red carpet. After excursions to Oxford and Stratford, he went to Scotland as the guest of old friends, and on his return was invited by the Secretary of State to meet Lord Hardinge, the Viceroy-designate. He left Marseilles *en route* for India on the 2nd December.

VIII

Early in January he started on a tour in his Kathiawar dominions, and after his return he presided at a conference of the Arya Samaj at Ranoli, which was held on the 26th February 1911. As a diplomatic and political gesture this was of doubtful wisdom. The Arya Samaj was founded by Swami Dayanand, a Brahman of Kathiawar, who found little response in his own Province of Bombay, but managed to secure a considerable following in the Punjab. It was, and was intended to be, a purely religious movement, designed to attack such social questions as early marriages, the treatment of widows, the fostering of education, especially of women, a rational attitude towards the outcasts. In religion it was iconoclastic, and waged war upon the worship of idols. In these directions it was doing excellent and unimpeachable work. But when the great wave of sedition flowed over India, which began in 1907, the Arya Samaj fell under suspicion. Sir Valentine Chirol wrote in 1910:

'But whereas in other parts of India the idea of social reform came to be associated with that of Western ascendancy and therefore weakened and gave way before the rising tide of

reaction against that ascendancy, it has been associated in the Punjab with the cry of "Arya for the Aryans" and the political activities of the Arya Samaj, or at least of a number of its most prominent members who have figured conspicuously in the anti-British agitation of the last few years, have secured for it from Hindu orthodoxy a measure of tolerance and even of goodwill which its social activities would certainly not otherwise have received. That the Arya Samaj, which shows the impress of Western influence in so much of its social work, should at the same time have associated itself so intimately with a political movement directed against British rule is one of the many anomalies presented by the problem of Indian unrest.¹

Sir Valentine goes on to admit that the Samaj never definitely committed itself to any political programme, and that many of its members may have confined themselves to the original object of social and religious work. Nevertheless he claims that Lala Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh, both prominent figures in those stormy years, were Arya Samajists; that Bhai Parmanand—Professor in the Dayanand Anglo-Vedic College, and a Samajist—was found in possession of formulae for making bombs, and other suspicious literature; and that in a great trial in Patiala State, which never reached its final stage because the defendants made an abject submission to the Maharaja, most of them belonged to the organization and some were prominent members. We are not concerned to criticize, deny, or uphold the validity of these arguments—Sir Valentine may have been right or wrong; but he undoubtedly reflected the feeling of Anglo-India at the time. Even in remote Provinces—perhaps indeed because they were remote, and did not understand its social activities—the Arya Samaj was looked upon as a disaffected body, the potential danger of which was the greater because it was organized. The Brahmo Samaj of Bengal

¹ *Indian Unrest*, by Sir Valentine Chirol, p. 111.

was admitted to be nothing more than a kind of Puritan or Protestant sect which did not stray outside religion, but the reputation of the Arya Samaj was that while it was in some rather vague and undefined way religious, it was also—perhaps in some rather vague and undefined way—political. And as men's minds were then concentrated somewhat fiercely upon politics, the religious and social aspect of the Samaj receded into the background.

The Maharaja accepted the invitation, sublimely unconscious that his action could possibly be capable of misconstruction. The aims of the society were exactly those which he had been pursuing for years past, both by precept and in practice :

‘I welcome’, he said, ‘the work of social enlightenment of the masses which the missionary zeal of the Arya Samaj has undertaken. I have observed with gratification that it has been energetic in its efforts towards the amelioration of the condition of the nation, the raising of the status of our country, and the banishment of ignorance and superstition through the spread of knowledge.’¹

He classed the Arya Samaj as a ‘religious brotherhood’, and his discourse was mainly confined to tracing the progress and the evolution of Hinduism. And he went on :

‘Human activity may roughly be divided into three kinds : (1) Religious, (2) Social, and (3) Political, all closely interdependent and indissolubly bound together. In seeking emancipation from the tyranny of social usages you have a chance of rising to a higher religion as well as a higher political plane. . . . The political well-being of a nation is built up to a large extent on its social and religious achievements. A society torn by internal jealousies between class and class, and where ignorance and prejudice have sway over reason, can have no hopeful political outlook. As long as you do not violate the laws of a country, your social and religious activities are sure to react on your

¹ *Speeches and Addresses*, vol. ii, p. 276.

general advancement. Good government is bound to follow in the train of united action and progressive enlightenment on the part of the people. If a Government is not sympathetic, especially where its officers are drawn from the subject class, the fault lies with the people themselves.' ¹

That was all, and to that not the most narrowly patriotic of Englishmen could have taken exception. The Maharaja was an idealist, but an idealist with a difference. He was not content with pious aspirations. For many years he had preached social and religious reform, and so far as lay in his own power he had done his best to put his preaching into practice in his own State. But he wanted social and religious reform that they might lead to economic progress, to general enlightenment, and eventually to Indian nationhood. He had no quarrel with the British Government. He fearlessly criticized their policy, especially *vis-à-vis* the Indian States, and he declined to accept without protest and in a spirit of subservience any decision with which he conscientiously disagreed. But the British work in irrigation he called 'one of the most splendid and irreproachable chapters in the history of British rule', and praised the British 'characteristic energy'. Least of all did he desire to see the overthrow of British rule, which would have to be replaced either by Indian self-government or by some kind of foreign rule. He had told his countrymen in 1902 that until the *ancien régime* of custom and prejudice had been overcome, a national government was impossible. Was there anything that had happened in those brief eight years to suggest that the victory had been won? He was quite ready to welcome what the Government of India Act calls the 'increasing association' of the people with the Government of their country, but that was a very different thing from violently snatching the reins from the hands that

¹ Ibid., vol. ii, p. 285.

held them. Unfortunately, men who knew little or nothing of the man and his views judged solely by his activities. Things done in all innocence were made to look sinister. The time of Baroda's greatest trial was yet to come, but men pieced together this or that small incident, without knowing the whole truth, and drew their conclusions. 'The unwavering and fundamental loyalty of the Gaekwar to the British Crown', say the biographers of another Indian Prince, 'had not yet been fully vindicated, as it has since been in ample measure.'¹ If the truth had been fully known, it needed no vindication.

On the 19th April the Maharaja again sailed for Europe. The King's Coronation was approaching, and London was of course full to bursting. The party had not made arrangements in time, and after some frantic house-hunting, eventually drifted into Prince's Gate at a rent of 800 guineas for seven weeks. Engagements were plentiful and were as hard work as State affairs in Baroda. Some rather naïve negotiations went on with the India Office about seats in the Abbey; apparently the staff had not realized that the whole of the Empire would be fully represented, to say nothing of Europe, and the reporter of the tour mentions with a note of surprise, that 'the Abbey was packed with people from floor to the top, and from six to seven thousand people representing all the civilized nations of the world appeared to have met there'. However, all was satisfactorily arranged, and the Maharaja attended in plain Indian dress with the full robes of the Star of India. Next day he joined in the Indian Section of the long progress of Their Majesties through London, and the day after journeyed to Southampton for the Naval Review, staying over the night on board the *Mongolia* to see the grand illumination of the Fleet. Other festivities followed—a gala performance at the Opera, Their

¹ *Madhar Rao Sindia of Gwalior*, by Bull and Haksar, p. 163.

Majesties' Garden Party, and a lunch given to the King at the Guildhall, to which His Highness went unattended. A more intimate ceremony was the presentation by the King in person of Coronation medals to the Indian Ruling Princes, and to the Indian and Colonial troops, the Princes being received in the Palace itself while the troops were drawn up in the grounds.

The Maharaja's public engagements did not end there. In July he was called upon to preside at the first Universal Races Congress, an invitation which was a compliment to his wide knowledge of such matters, and his extensive experience in foreign travel. Shortly afterwards he again presided at a meeting in honour of Sir K. G. Gupta, who had been awarded the K.C.S.I. The occasion was of special importance because Lord Morley, who had carried the point in the teeth of strenuous opposition in high quarters, had appointed Sir K. G. Gupta as the first Indian Member of the Council under what are known as the Morley-Minto reforms. Lord Morley was himself present, and with his usual passion for Liberalism could not refrain from a mild but unflattering reference to his Conservative predecessors. The Maharaja delivered a short speech which the reporter called 'a notable pronouncement, as was to be expected from a person like His Highness the Gaekwar'. In it he pleaded for the fuller recognition of Indians of capacity under the British Government even as he himself had appointed a European as his Chief Minister. A short visit to Scotland and a run over to Ireland to stay with Lord Aberdeen for the Dublin Horse Show followed these strenuous public activities, and after a quiet time in London the Maharaja returned to India.

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IX

It was during his stay in England in 1911 that the question of sedition in Baroda became acute, and shortly after his return to India occurred the famous Durbar incident; but these important subjects have already received fuller treatment. In 1912 the Maharaja did not go to Europe but contented himself with Ootacamund and Poona. Before he left Baroda he attended certain local meetings, notably one in connexion with the library movement, but his mind was preoccupied with the Press attacks upon him and with difficulties about Princess Indira's marriage. Affairs in Baroda were going on smoothly, but the season had been bad and the Maharaja had been inspecting the relief measures. He wrote to Lord Hardinge from Ootacamund:

'I have now been more than a month here; and though I enjoy the hunting and the peace, still I find the climate, particularly this year, very warm and relaxing. . . . The expense of coming here is very great; and the good to one's health is not commensurate. A trip to Europe is less expensive and is a real beneficial change.'¹

And then, characteristically, afraid that this remark might be misinterpreted:

'However, I am writing this casually, with no object.

'I have toured round all the famine-stricken districts and examined the works in progress, and made provision to meet distress. The provision is ample; and I have impressed upon the Famine Commissioner the need of personal inspection. The distress this year is nothing as compared with the famine of 1899-1900, which I had witnessed and which was indeed terrible.'¹

It was about this time that the idea of an Art Gallery

¹ *Selected Letters*, vol. ii, No. 1020, p. 715, dated 5.6.1912.

as an adjunct to the Museum began to take definite shape. It had long been in incubation, and for the Western part of the collection the Maharaja had secured a European expert in the person of Mr. M. H. Spielmann. He wrote to Mr. Spielmann in April 1912 :

‘I have been visiting the Picture Gallery of late : The construction of the building is finished, and I have asked the Chief Engineer to carry out your instructions about the hanging of the pictures, etc.’¹

It is claimed for the Baroda Gallery that it contains the best collection of Indian paintings in the world, but the Maharaja, true to his cosmopolitan tendencies, would not have thought it complete without Western examples. There was here no question of ostentation or vanity, or even of any desire to imitate. It was His Highness’s definite conviction—a conviction which every one will share—that the arts, in what form soever they may be, whether in music, in architecture, in painting, in sculpture, or in literature, have a very real place in the culture and refinement of a people. A people without art is a barbarous people; a people among whom the arts once flourished, but have declined, is a decadent people. The Maharaja did his best to encourage all the arts in his own State, by offering prizes for literature, by establishing a school for music, by attaching a Fine Art section to the technical school called the Kala Bhavan, and now by presenting to the public specimens of Indian and European painting collected together in a well-designed building. The collection was completed and thrown open to the public in 1921; doubtless the work was hindered by the War.

Prince Jaisinh Rao’s wedding took place in February 1913. The Maharaja was ill and could not be present at the banquet, but he seized the occasion of reiterating by

¹ Ibid., vol. ii, No. 1011, p. 709, dated 24.4.1912.

the mouth of the Dewan his unswerving loyalty to the Throne. The toast of the King-Emperor was, he knew, generally given without speeches, but

‘on this joyous occasion my heart is too full to permit my proposing this toast, and without giving utterance to the feeling of sincere friendship and attachment which I bear to the person of His Majesty. . . . With some others present here I have the proud privilege of being personally acquainted with His Majesty, and have marked with increasing gratification the anxious care with which His Majesty, both before and after ascending the throne, has watched over the interests and welfare of his Indian subjects.’¹

‘Some day’, as he said after the Durbar incident, ‘the truth will be known.’ He also took the opportunity of congratulating Lord Hardinge, and India, on that Viceroy’s escape from assassination by the bomb which had been thrown at him shortly before in Delhi:

‘We rejoice that the cowardly attempt failed and that so noble and precious a life has been spared to us, and we join our prayer to those that have gone up from many a church, temple, and mosque, and from palaces and huts alike, for the speedy recovery of our beloved Viceroy.’¹

But the Maharaja was really ill, and under the doctor’s advice he once more left India for Europe. Evian, Contrexéville, St. Moritz—the names are evidence enough of the main object of his journey; it was from St. Moritz that Princess Indira went to London to be married to the Maharaja of Cooch Bihar, according to the rites of the Brahmo Samaj. The Maharaja did not leave St. Moritz till the 9th September, and after some days spent in Lausanne, Geneva, and Paris, reached London on the 2nd October, where they were joined by Prince Dhairya-shil Rao, the youngest son, who had been in Devonshire

¹ *Speeches and Addresses*, vol. ii, p. 339.

with his tutor. The stay in London was very brief, and was somewhat of a family affair, the Maharaja having invited not only his own young relatives who were in England, but also young men of the State who had gone to England for study in one subject or another. The party left again for India on the 24th October, and reached Bombay on the 7th November.

The great event of the close of 1913 was the marriage of the Maharaja's second son, Prince Shivaji Rao; and at one of the festivities in honour of the occasion the Maharaja declared his faith in physical culture, of which the Prince himself was a notable example. He declined to believe that everything could be attributed to the climate, and bluntly laid the blame for physical imperfection at the door of ignorance—'ignorance in religion, domestic life, sanitation'.¹ And then by a curious transition of thought he adverted to Indian religious art:

'Think for a moment of the idols used in religion by our people. Most of them are very ugly. Many parts of the bodies . . . are hardly recognizable. They are really exaggerated figures. There ought to be better idols than that: why should not the images of the deities be types of beauty?'¹ It was all very well to talk of the eye of faith, but after all 'the demands of reason are also great and should be allied with a reasonable faith.'¹

That again was characteristic. If the Maharaja thought a thing was ugly, he said so, and no amount of sophistry would persuade him that it was not. It is usual to defend Indian art on the ground that it does not pretend, like Greek art, to represent nature. It is more subtle; it tries to portray something invisible, something abstract, an emotion or a quality. That may be true of the best art. The Maharaja's artistic sense went straight to the point, and he declared that the majority of the idols—which are usually of very inferior workmanship—was not art at all.

¹ *Ibid.*, vol. ii, p. 353.

He was, as it were, comparing the painted doll dressed in blue with a tinsel crown, which does duty for the Virgin in some village Catholic Church with the Ariadne in the Vatican.

But before he left again for Europe on what proved to be a memorable tour, he had something more important to do than talk about ugly idols at a children's gathering. In 1904 the massive inquiry which Sir Frederick Nicholson had made into the Co-operative Movement had become a Government of India Act, and Baroda, following as usual in the wake of British India, had started Co-operative Societies in 1905. A suspicious and conservative peasantry did not take kindly to the novelty at first; they understood the ways of the money-lender—he might be cruel and greedy, but he was at least familiar. With Government one never knew. The scented flowers they offered might, and probably would, end in the bitter fruit of taxation; the Greek gift might turn out to be a Trojan horse. The Government both of Baroda and India knew very well from the experience of many years that the peasantry never take kindly to anything new. They persevered. The movement began to take root. In 1914 the subject was of so great importance that the Maharaja in person opened the first Co-operative Conference. He declared his aims at once—aims which he had consistently followed all through his reign:

'In rural life, the principles of co-operation are especially important and they should permeate all village activities, making of each centre a single economic unit. The trend of modern civilization is towards the aggregation of these units. If the whole village community acts as one in buying and selling, in production and consumption, its income and happiness will proportionately increase. They will be able to make a better stand against the inevitable vicissitudes of daily life; they will develop habits of forethought, which will help them to provide for the

future; and they will be doing their part in the proportion of those reforms which my Government desires so greatly to foster.’¹

And lest his audience should be dismayed at so vast a prospect as a comprehensive attack upon the almost universal indebtedness of the people, he drew on his European experience to remind them that these difficulties had been overcome and the problems solved:

‘Those of you who have studied the history of the movement, for instance in Germany, Denmark, and Holland, must have been convinced that if we desire, as desire we surely must, to introduce the benefits of civilization amongst our people in rural areas, there is nothing more potent, more stimulating to that end than the Co-operative Society. . . . In the countries I have cited the principles of co-operation have worked miracles amongst the peasantry. Peace and plenty have replaced poverty and all its distressing accompaniments, and real and solid foundations have been laid for national prosperity . . . and the problem which awaits our attention here in Baroda differs in no material way from that which the leaders of the movement in other countries found confronting them at the outset of their labours.’²

The State could and would help, but ‘State help should be so used as to help the people to help themselves’. He ended upon a note of earnest appeal to all present to assist with all their powers ‘this magnificent conception of men of great gifts and greater imagination, rural co-operation’. By the time of this address there were 236 societies in Baroda, with a membership of 6,000. The amended Act of 1912 had given the movement an impetus which it has sustained. A Central Co-operative Institute was formed in 1925, the year of the Golden Jubilee, and by the end of 1927 there were 750 other societies, with a membership of upwards of 25,000. They do not all work well, and it is

¹ *Speeches and Addresses*, vol. ii, p. 355.

² *Ibid.*, p. 357.

doubtful whether they have made much impression as yet upon the stupendous aggregate of rural indebtedness, either in Baroda or in India generally. But every year brings improvements, and the Government of Baroda, like the Government of India, is steadily working with determination and with hope to the end which the Maharaja has so vividly sketched.

With one exception, to which allusion will be made later, this may be said to have closed the list of reforms which the Maharaja introduced into the State. He has put the land settlement upon a rational basis; he has introduced compulsory education, and given the people libraries; he has built railways—almost lavishly; he has done his best with the so far unpromising irrigation; he has fostered art, and tried to encourage industry; and he has set up a Department of Agriculture with its Veterinary handmaid; and to crown the whole he has introduced Co-operation. All this the people know, and appreciate, but to those who for some inscrutable reason think that the pains and penalties of administration are the greatest gift of all, or who have been indoctrinated with the peculiar notion of ‘making the world safe for democracy’, he has not moved fast enough in the direction of self-government. The Maharaja knows and appreciates the impatience of these good folk, but he is not to be hurried. He will not move forward except at the time of his own choosing.

In April 1914 he went to Europe for the last time for several years, and in August, as all the world knows, the Great War broke out.

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Chapter Sixteen

THE WAR

THE outbreak of war surprised the Maharaja at Vichy, where he was taking the cure. Naturally enough, the first thought was to return to his State as soon as possible, but that was more easily said than done. Every one was excited. The trains were all wanted for the troops; money was running short, and the French banks refused to supply it without authority from Paris. This was no doubt inconvenient, but a very naïve note of annoyance runs through the narrative of the tour prepared by the Secretary, as though the writer had been quite unable to realize that peace and war were two very different things. There were no doubt many individual cases of inconvenience, and even of hardship, and the highest was not exempt from them any more than the lowest. But if at times the orders betray impatience at the shortcomings of servants, no one knows better than the Maharaja the devotion of his servants to him. They could not bear to think that His Highness's comfort should be interfered with in any way, and when they were at the end of their resources, there was nothing left to them but to grumble. As a matter of fact, however, the French people showed themselves remarkably considerate, and it is only fair to add that their courtesy was generously acknowledged. The hotel-manager relieved them of any anxiety about money, and when every public building in the place—churches, schools, hotels, boarding-houses—was requisitioned for hospitals for the wounded, he most considerately placed his own villa at the disposal of the Maharaja. Through the good offices of Sir Francis Bertie, then British Ambassador in Paris, the Maharaja was able to secure a first-class carriage for himself and a luggage-van for the party, to be attached to the Paris train.

Nor was he to be outdone in courtesy. Things had been made as easy for him as under the circumstances was possible, but other poor folk could not command these facilities. In the hotel-manager's villa he took in four stranded Indians, amongst them the justly celebrated Mr. Gokhale, who seemed like having to sleep in the streets of Vichy; and in his reserved carriage he took no less than eighteen people, besides the four Indians just mentioned, stipulating only that they must have passports, and that there must be room in the carriage—presumably to breathe! The Maharaja broke the journey in Paris, and by misadventure got into the wrong train for Boulogne. This meant that he missed the Folkstone boat, but, again by the courtesy of the Captain, he was able to sleep on board, and arrived in England without further adventure.

The Maharani was not so lucky. She was in Carlsbad when the Sarajevo murders set all Europe ablaze. England declared war on Germany but not simultaneously on Austria, and the Emperor of Austria took a kindly view of the plight of foreigners in his country. But on the evening of the 8th August a mob of 1,000 people besieged the hotel where the Maharani was, demanding the blood of two French cooks who had, or were alleged to have, made insulting remarks about Germany. For a long time they persisted, and at last the cooks left the hotel in custody and under escort, but not without considerable personal damage from the infuriated crowd. The danger seemed to be over; but about eight in the evening another howling mob, much larger than the first arrived on the scene. The Maharani is anything but a timid woman. She not only braved the mob calmly, but telegraphed to the Foreign Office in Vienna to complain of the behaviour of the townsfolk, a proceeding which brought the prompt reply that everything possible was

to be done for Her Highness's protection. But Carlsbad was no place for an Indian Maharani, and following her own intrepid instinct, she left it for an 800 mile motor-drive into Switzerland. The journey was accomplished without mishap, and thence she reached Havre via Paris, and eventually England, travelling in a Hospital Ship by courtesy of the Commander, as there was no room in the ordinary boat.

The Maharaja's first thought was that the Maharani should take refuge in Italy. Baroda, naturally anxious, had advised an early return to India and Italy was on the way.¹ It was difficult to know what to do, and men's minds had not recovered from the great shock; in the end, as we have seen, nothing came of all these plans, and Maharaja and Maharani met in London.

Almost immediately upon the declaration of war, the Maharaja placed all the resources of the State at the disposal of the King-Emperor. It was a fine gesture and was gratefully appreciated. Not long afterwards the Maharaja had an interview with the King and Queen—the first since the Delhi Durbar of 1911. Rumour says that His Majesty, wiser and more discerning than his indignant subjects, had never resented that famous incident, but in any case all the scars of that time were healed by the magnificent proof of devotion to the Empire which the Maharaja had just shown. In the sense of the unity of the British Empire, and of its devotion to the Throne, all minor differences disappeared. Nor was the gesture unaccompanied by practical action. The State contributed altogether some 35 lakhs either directly to the war chest or to subsidiary institutions, besides horses, tents, railway material, and other gifts in kind. Throughout the War the Maharaja paid Rs. 12,000 monthly, and the State of Baroda, proportionately to its resources,

¹ *Selected Letters*, vol. ii, No. 1192, p. 795, dated 9.8.1914.

was not surpassed in loyal generosity by any State in India.

But whatever might have been the excitement in Europe, Baroda affairs had to go on. India was too far away to hear more than the distant reverberations of the earthquake that was tearing Europe to pieces. It was indeed a strange, almost an eerie, experience to leave the clatter and turmoil of England, the hopes and the fears that fluctuated from hour to hour, the darkness of the unlighted or the shaded streets, and the overhead excitement of the raiding aeroplanes, the singleness of purpose, and the overmastering preoccupation of the War and the War alone, for the placid atmosphere of India, where things seemed to go on much as usual, and the main apprehensions were the slowly rising prices and a shortage of whisky. These things, however, came later. When the Maharaja returned to India in 1914 nobody thought that the War would last more than a few months, and no serious call had been made upon the resources of the Empire. The entry of Turkey upon the side of the Central Empires was annoying, but not disquieting, and no man could have predicted that in her anxiety to secure the Persian Gulf, England would eventually, with the aid of her Indian troops, be lured on to the conquest of Baghdad and of Jerusalem.

It was not then surprising that immediately after his arrival the Maharaja busied himself with State affairs. In a letter to the Dewan, dated only three days after his arrival,¹ there is no allusion to the War, nor to any of his experiences by sea or land. He went at once to business. There was some hitch in excise contracts; some water-works were unduly delayed; suggestions are thrown out for keeping certain executive officers in closer touch with

¹ The letter is dated 7th November, but this is a mistake as the Maharaja did not reach Bombay till 4th December.

magisterial work—‘a few thoughts I have put down during my leisure’. He was never long away from Baroda in the spirit.

II

The War, of course, prevented any more journeys to Europe. The preoccupation of the War, and the drain it made on the resources of Baroda, prevented the inauguration of any new schemes, and the administration pursued its placid way. But the Maharaja was not content. His active mind sought an outlet in other directions, and he found it in the encouragement of Sanskrit literature. When he founded the Library movement in 1910 he had also founded the nucleus of a Sanskrit library, to which his brother, Sampat Rao, had generously added a collection of over 600 books; upwards of 400 manuscripts had also been secured by the acquisition of another private library. The State had commissioned a learned Pundit, Anant Krishna Shastri, to tour over India and collect what he could find of rare and valuable manuscripts, with the result that the Oriental Institute of Baroda now possesses over 13,000 Sanskrit manuscripts and is regarded as one of the foremost manuscript libraries in India. It was, however, in 1915 that he considered, or at any rate put into practice, the idea of publishing a series of these treasures to be called the Gaekwar's Oriental Series. There are now about fifty published volumes in this interesting and valuable collection, and a number more are in the Press—a very fair result, as scholars will admit, when we consider the enormous patience required to sift the valuable from the worthless, to decipher ancient manuscripts often scratched by a stylus on palm leaves, and to transfer the result to paper in modern form. The series includes poetry, the drama, philosophy, grammar, ritual, and the famous work of Bharata on music, called

the Nāṭyaśāstra; it is almost encyclopedic in character, and further search will gradually reveal more treasures. Every Indian scholar has gratefully and frankly acknowledged the work of European scholars in Sanskrit, and while he will deplore the removal of manuscripts to Europe to enrich the great libraries there, much as Italy must have deplored the Napoleonic robbery of her art treasures, or as we to-day deplore the exodus of masterpieces to America, he will admit that the 'loot' has been 'carefully preserved, and much better preserved than probably it would have been their lot in India, at least for some time'.¹ The Pundits, perhaps despondent at the neglect of Sanskrit under the influence of Macaulay, whose self-sufficient and wholesale condemnation of Oriental works only serves to-day to display his own colossal ignorance of the subject, neglected their precious manuscripts, and Professor Hariprasad Sastri, presiding over a Conference on Sanskrit Culture, told the melancholy story of the carefully preserved collection of a Pundit which his son removed to the kitchen, where they were covered with soot. His wife discovered the heap and wanting firewood she burnt, not indeed the palm-leaves on which they were written, but the boards which held them together, so that the leaves fell in a confused mass which in course of time were thrown on the dung heap.

India, partly at any rate under the stimulus of European research, began to take an awakened interest in her own literature, and it is to this revival that Sanskrit scholars owe many long-buried manuscripts. The Durbars of Mysore and Travancore seem to have been first in the field, closely followed by the Maharajas of Baroda and Kashmir. As the Arthashastra of Kautilya is the pride of Mysore, as the works now generally believed to be those

¹ Presidential Congress at the 5th Indian Oriental Conference, Lahore, Prof. Hariprasad Sastri, p. 6.

of Bhasa are the pride of Travancore, so are the Tattva-sangraha of Sautaraksita and other works of later Buddhism the pride of Baroda, under its learned worker, Dr. Bhattacharya. It would have been very unlike the Maharaja, anxious as he is to see his State in the van of progress, willing as he is to profit by example, and devoted as he is to the cause of education in whatever form, if he had not seized upon the opportunity to cultivate Sanskrit learning within the State.

The Maharaja delivered himself of the faith that was in him in the course of two addresses which he gave to the Sanskrit Conference, called to Baroda to discuss the lines on which the revival of Sanskrit learning should proceed. He upbraided the learned Pundits for their apathy and want of method, and held up for their imitation the example of European scholars :

‘Western scholars have been at great pains to study Sanskrit literature critically and from a historical standpoint, and have brought into existence various societies, and with their assistance have continued these studies ceaselessly. Similarly, with a view to keep up the awakening thus generated, a congress of Orientalists is held every three years in Europe. The activities of these scholars have not been confined to Europe alone. In India itself they have with great labour revived the study of Sanskrit literature by establishing societies like the branches of the Royal Asiatic Society. But I do not think that we Hindus—the people of this land which is the birthplace of the Sanskrit literature—have yet seriously taken up the study of that literature from the above standpoints. Our people may not have been unmindful of this kind of study, but I am constrained to say that they have not bestowed on it the labour which its importance demands.’¹

The attitude of the Pundits seemed to him like the attitude of Europe to letters before the Renaissance. They wasted their time in fruitless discussion that led

¹ *Speeches and Addresses*, vol. ii, p. 391.

nowhere. The whole body of their learning was 'one-sided, just as the sphere of a frog may be confined to the dirty pool in which he lives'. He poured withering scorn upon the methods of his own people, who possessed 'persons whose learning in Sanskrit lore is many times greater than that of European scholars', but who rejected or indifferently ignored all critical and historical methods, so wedded were they to their own ideas, so blinded by superstition, and so devoid of general education and real culture. He called them to arms in the battle of letters:

'With a view to our giving the people of the whole world the benefit of this knowledge, it is necessary to bring about a revival and diffusion of Sanskrit learning. . . Like the Western peoples, we must cultivate a comparative and critical faculty for studying the language, and the subjects to be learned through its medium. We must cull out whatever beautiful and acceptable things we find in our ancient lore as well as in Western culture and attempt a felicitous blending of the two features so as to give the lie to the saying—East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet.'¹

III

Before leaving Baroda the Maharaja performed two opening ceremonies—of the waterworks and the lying-in hospital at Pattan, in point of population the second place in the Raj. It has been his dream to supply the whole State with pure drinking-water, and though he has not quite accomplished that, he has certainly gone a long way towards it. It would be difficult to find an area of equal size in India which is so well supplied with water, and indeed with electric light, which to the Western mind has become no longer a luxury, but a necessity. Even small places with no pretensions to be called towns have their water, and though electricity is more sparsely distributed,

¹ *Speeches and Addresses*, vol. ii, pp. 400-1.

it has come to places which in British India would long have had to do without. But the year was growing old, and the sun was waxing hot; the middle of May found him established in Ootacamund. It was a poor substitute for Europe—‘the weather is not bracing enough’—and the War had made things very quiet. Such as it was, it had to serve, but as there was nothing much to do, the Maharaja embarked on a shooting tour in Southern India, and paid a visit to the Raja of Kollengode, an estate in Malabar, with whom he is still on terms of friendship. July saw him in Bangalore, and before August arrived he was back in Baroda. It was from there that he wrote to Lord Hardinge offering a contribution of 5 lakhs for aeroplanes—an offer which was of course gratefully accepted.

The year closed on a note of contentment. It was true that there was not much leisure for any one while the war lasted, and the end of 1915 seemed to have brought Europe no nearer to peace. But things were going well in Baroda, and the war apart, there was every reason for self-congratulation. The ‘settlement’ of the land—probably a re-settlement—had proved successful; all the land was taken up; there were no arrears of revenue; railway work, always a special hobby, was going merrily forward, and the people were happy and cheerful.¹ Though the European heavens were still black with clouds, the sky in Baroda was blue and smiling.

On New Year’s Day, 1916, the Maharaja gave a banquet to which his European friends were invited. The toast of the King-Emperor seemed to demand a little more than the usual invitation given without comment:

‘No matter’, he said, ‘how insistent the demands on our attention of other matters, there is but one which really grips our hearts strongly to-day: we cannot forget that the Empire of which His Majesty is the beloved Sovereign, of which India is

¹ *Selected Letters*, vol. ii, No. 1262, p. 832, dated 24.12.1915.

proud to know that she is reckoned the brightest jewel, is engaged in a life and death struggle with ruthless enemies for her very existence. On the issue of that struggle depend the liberty and happiness of every one of us.' ¹

He concluded with an expression of his 'deepest devotion to the throne and a prayer for a glorious victory and the restoration of peace'. The prayer was to be answered, but not before Europe and the world had passed through three more years of agony.

In January he passed a few days in Lucknow, and while there he learned of the cruel sinking of the *Persia* in the Eastern Mediterranean. He was greatly shocked, and immediately wrote to the Viceroy with further offers of help to the Empire, to take the form this time of a monthly contribution of Rs.12,000. Indeed, at this time of stress it was seldom or never that an appeal was made to him in vain, though the monthly contribution was entirely his own idea. On the 10th March he is writing to Lady Willingdon in reply to an appeal for the Lady Hardinge Medical College at Delhi. He reminds her that he has already given a lakh to the College, but as 'too much cannot be done for advancing the noble cause' he will give Rs.62,000 more, the cost of one 'unit of College Wards'.

This time he spent the hot weather in Kashmir. 'Affairs', he says, 'in India are quite quiet; and the fact that a great war is going on requires imagination to realize it.'² That was as true of 1916 as of 1915, and was to last to the end of the war. When the writer, on the eve of leaving India, announced the armistice in the bazaar of a considerable town, the news was received without marked enthusiasm, one man merely asking, 'Will the price of rice go down?' While the Maharaja was in Kashmir the Dewan, V. P. Madhav Rao, retired. His

¹ *Speeches and Addresses*, vol. ii, p. 409.

² *Selected Letters*, vol. iii, No. 1295, p. 848, dated 13.5.1916.

loss was much felt, but the Maharaja found a capable substitute in Mr. (afterwards Sir) Manubhai Mehta, who had risen from the ranks, and who was to hold the Dewanship for a hitherto unprecedented term of years.

The Maharaja divided his time in Kashmir between seeing the sights of that enchanting country and the cares of the administration of his own State. He sent various directions to the Minister, now on this point, now on that, in themselves of no great importance but evidence of his interest in State affairs. He stayed in Kashmir until the 5th October, when he went to Simla to stay a few days with the new Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford, with whom he was about to begin a cordial friendship. A pleasant stay in Simla was followed by a short visit to Kapurthala, and thence back to Baroda. But he had not been long there before he was again called to Delhi, this time to present an address to the Viceroy on behalf of the Ruling Princes of India. The occasion was momentous, and in a sense it marks an epoch. The idea had flitted before the minds of other Viceroys of calling the Princes into conference, or of devising some method by which they might be able to express a corporate opinion. Lord Chelmsford was the first Viceroy to give effect to a plan which has now taken more formal shape as the Chamber of Princes, equipped with the regular machinery of such bodies. The Maharaja of Baroda, as the premier Prince present, gave expression to the general feeling of the body when he said that they saw in the Conference 'the commencement of an institution full of potential good'. 'The ideal', he said, 'we have before us is a Council of Princes with specified functions and well-defined powers, and that it may be realized speedily, that it may perhaps be looked on in future as one of the landmarks of Your Excellency's term of office.'¹ The Viceroy's reply was sympathetic and

¹ Ibid., vol. ii, p. 412.

in admirable taste. He pointed out that these things cannot be done in a hurry, and that though naturally he would like to see the Conference well established during his term of office, the official life of the Viceroy was a short one. And then, introducing a personal note: 'For myself,' he said, 'it has been a source of intense gratification that I have been able to come into close personal touch with Your Highnesses, that you are no longer merely honoured names to me, but living personalities in whose actions and welfare I can take a living personal interest.'¹ And so upon this note of friendship and good will the proceedings ended.

IV

This Conference of Princes set some of them thinking, and the impending visit of Mr. Montagu, the Secretary of State for India—a visit fraught with momentous consequences for the country—stimulated the Maharaja of Nabha to send the Maharaja a scheme of his own devising. As yet, however, the Princes had by no means realized the reactions which drastic changes in British India might have upon the States, though forecasts of the impending changes were freely canvassed in the newspapers. It was, indeed, curious that nobody did so. Everybody talked of Provincial Autonomy, of elected Ministers, of dyarchy and the 'Curtis Scheme', of this, that, and the other, all tending towards the glorious democratic vision, and the establishment of that system of government of which the world and President Wilson were so strangely proud; but no one saw that some day or other, with the realization of that same glorious vision, the States would loom large as one of the great problems of the situation. The Maharaja was interested, and with his usual courtesy he replied at some length to the Maharaja of Nabha, but he clearly

¹ *Speeches and Addresses*, vol. ii, p. 414.

looked upon the whole thing as academic. It was a 'matter which lies more in the province of the scientific constitution framer', and the Princes had too much to do in their own States to bother about working out details 'with the meticulous care which they deserve'.

After all, as he saw it, the visit of Mr. Montagu was no concern of theirs.

'I understand Mr. Montagu is coming merely to see present conditions in British India and to confer with the Government of India and the chosen representatives of the people of British India. I have no doubt that if any matters which concern the Princes of India come into discussion, the Government of India will consult the Princes before coming to any conclusion.'¹

For all that there were, he thought, matters on which the Princes should speak with a collective voice. A Federation of the States on the pattern of the German Bundesrath seemed to him to offer possibilities, and he suggested the formation of a Council of States, and the establishment of a Court of Appeal which should arbitrate, much as the International Court of Justice is now supposed to do, in matters of dispute between the Indian Government and the States. What, however, was to be the goal of these measures was 'the reduction or even cessation of interference in purely internal matters and the right to be consulted in matters which affect the Native States and British India equally'.¹

He sent a similar letter to the Maharaja of Kolhapur, but he did not profess to have really studied the subject, and there is no suggestion anywhere that either he or his correspondents had considered the matter *vis-à-vis* British India. British India and Indian India, to use the phrase of the Butler Committee, were two separate entities which could be discussed apart, and the question which agitated

¹ *Selected Letters*, vol. iii, No. 1535, p. 978, dated 7.11.1917.

the Princes was, not what the place of the States would be in a democratic and Swarajist India, but how their relations with the Government of India could be improved.

V

The year 1917 glided quietly away. The Maharaja had given up his Bombay Palace, at Lord Willingdon's suggestion, to be used as a hospital for the wounded from Mesopotamia. Sir Manubhai Mehta was firmly established as Dewan, and affairs at Baroda were running their usual smooth course. Summer was spent at Ootacamund. In November he was invited to meet the Secretary of State in company with most of his brother Princes, but he did not go, judging that the agenda were not of sufficient importance. Baroda too, was again in the grip of the plague, and there were matters of State concern to be attended to. December found him the guest of the Maharaja of Mysore, where he was entertained by a sight of the 'Kheddah', the elephant-catching operations for which Mysore is famous. He also had some sport with bison and elephant, and the Maharani had the luck to bag one of the latter. It was here that the Maharaja received the news of the death of his elder brother, Anand Rao, to which allusion was made earlier. He returned to Bombay in the same month, and there he saw the New Year in. The honour of the G.C.I.E. was conferred upon him, and with characteristic courtesy he sent off quite a sheaf of letters, congratulating other Princes upon similar honours which they had received.

All through those terrible months of March and April 1918, when the fate of the War hung in the balance and the Germans were getting nearer and nearer to Paris, Baroda was 'jogging along as usual'. Not that the Maharaja was sublimely indifferent. He had been busy with the marriage of his granddaughter, Indumati Raje, to the

elder son of the Maharaja of Kolhapur, but in May he was writing to Lord Chelmsford:

'I thank Your Excellency very heartily for your kind telegram . . . acknowledging my offer of 15 lakhs towards the expenses of the War. I sincerely hope that the combined efforts of the British Empire and our Allies will bring about the only satisfactory conclusion of this war—a complete victory. I am afraid that the exploitation of the man-power of India has been unfortunately delayed, still I have no doubt that there will be a good muster in what we may call the warrior provinces of India. Unfortunately Gujerat is very poor soil for the breeding of warriors, and I fear that no amount of inducements will make the people of this country take up arms.'¹

That was it. Not only in Gujerat but elsewhere in India, no amount of inducement would make the people take up arms, if that meant exposing themselves to the arms in other people's hands. The warrior provinces of India responded magnificently. Fighting is in the blood. And, dimly as they may have understood the cause for these four years of bloodshed, the mere chance of a real war for King and Country was sufficient to attract. Europe has expressed her gratitude to them in the noble memorial that stands in the keeping of France on the battlefields of Neuve Chapelle. But who shall blame the industrious and peaceful peasant, whose ideas never strayed beyond his village and the prospect of the harvest? How could he know anything of the fire of patriotism or of the joy of battle, to whom even the Collector of his own district was little more than the shadow of an exalted name, and who, if he ever fired a gun, fired it only at a stray boar or deer, with no fear of danger except perhaps from the weapon itself? There were many parts of India which the war never touched, unless it were with a ripple which hardly disturbed the quiet life of the people, and the

¹ *Selected Letters*, vol. iii, No. 1610, p. 1013, dated 14.5.1918.

Maharaja's foreboding that not much was to be got out of Gujerat was perfectly justified.

That year 1918, with all its anxieties for Europe and the world, had some of the ills of Pandora's box to bestow upon Baroda. 'My poor State' had suffered all the previous winter from a visitation of the plague, the summer rains had almost failed, and then influenza scourged India with scorpions. The epidemic of 1918 was dramatic in its intensity. It carried off, as the Maharaja says, 'far more than even plague did', and it did not leave Baroda unscathed. But hope was still at the bottom of the box, and the Maharaja was writing when the intoxication of the Armistice was beginning to wear off.

'In India', he wrote to Lord Reay some days later, 'we are devoutly thankful that the awful war has ended so gloriously. All the country has celebrated the triumph, and in Baroda we have spent three days in festivities and feeding the poor.'¹

He spoke modestly. He had given generously for the celebration of victory by all classes of his people, and at a banquet which he gave in honour of victory he proposed the King-Emperor's health in words of more than ordinary solemnity:

'Now in the fullness of time God has given his arms a completeness of victory which we are met to-night to celebrate; for through that victory the whole world has escaped from a danger the extent of which it must be left to the historian of the future to measure. . . . We have shared with the peoples of the Empire the anxieties of many a dark hour during the past four years: we are glad that to-night it is vouchsafed to us to share in the celebration of our common victory over a common foe. I pray that this unity of spirit, thus strongly set in firm foundations, may ever endure to the perpetual benefits of the peoples and Governments of this mighty Empire . . . mighty and

¹ *Selected Letters*, vol. iii, No. 1699, p. 1060, dated 8.12.1918.

wonderful have been the achievements of the past: even more glorious I am persuaded, will be those of the peaceful future.

'Ladies and Gentlemen, I pray you to join me in drinking to the long life, health, and prosperity of His Majesty the King-Emperor and of his House. God save the King-Emperor.'¹

VI

Pandora's box had now done its worst and hope remained behind. The year 1919 opened pleasantly. The young Prince Dhairyashil had obtained a commission and was at the Cadets' Training School at Indore. He seemed to have an honourable career of useful work before him. The war was over, and even the weather was on its best behaviour—'we are having a wonderfully cold December (1918) and it is extremely pleasant'. The ravages of 1918 still had to be repaired, and the Maharaja excused himself from a visit to Simla to attend a conference of the Princes on the ground that he was obliged to superintend measures of relief and wished to visit some of the outlying districts in person. But in March Lord Chelmsford visited Baroda, and we may be sure that the Maharaja was not using a conventional phrase when he declared that it was a very real pleasure to be able to entertain the Viceroy whose hospitality he had enjoyed, and with whom he was on very cordial terms. In his speech at the customary banquet he alluded to three subjects which were never far from his thoughts: education, by which 'I mean the adequate training of the masses as well as of the classes. I mean not merely the flooding of the land with school-masters but rather the evolution of a system of instruction which will bring out the vast good which is in the people and shall strengthen them bodily, mentally, and spiritually'.² The other two were 'the expansion of industrial

¹ *Speeches and Addresses*, vol. ii, pp. 464-5.

² *Ibid.*, p. 469.

effort and the establishment of a suitable and widespread system of local self-government'.¹ Lord Chelmsford laid the foundation-stone of the Railway Workshops, an enterprise which, for a State of the size of Baroda, was very noteworthy. The Dewan explained the rise and development of railways in the State, and the Maharaja, with a graceful allusion to the 'sympathetic and liberal attitude of the Government of India towards the railway enterprise in Indian States', dwelt on the need that had been felt for the means of repairing the rolling stock.

The way to Europe was now open, but he did not start at once. He spent June and July in Kashmir. Gulmarg was like Switzerland with meadows full of 'pink, yellow, violet, blue, and white flowers nestling in velvety deep green grass—large expanses of snow and streams running ice cold':²

'The views are grand: we look down to the plain and away to the unconquered snows, and from the other side of the house through tall pine trees to the near snow-topped mountains.'³

It was there that he heard the news of the conclusion of peace on 28th June 1919, and he hastened to send his congratulations to the Viceroy in a strain which had now become familiar. All was at the moment *couleur de rose*, but in August he left the Delectable Mountains and returned to Baroda. There he found both Prince Jaisinh Rao and his daughter-in-law, Padmavati Raje, very ill and, as already related, he made early arrangements for the journey of the former to Europe, where he followed him in September.

Although the Maharaja had been the inspiration and, one might almost say, the physician of his Government, although he had devised many things, and had cured

¹ *Speeches and Addresses*, vol. ii, p. 469.

² *Selected Letters*, vol. iii, No. 1748, p. 1090, dated 19.6.1919.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. iii, No. 1756, p. 1098, dated 28.6.1919.

many defects, the very fact that he was, and is, able to leave the State for long periods is the witness of the efficiency of the administration. In the opening sentence of this work the qualifying phrase was advisedly used, 'so far as that may be'. No man, even if he be a superman of the Nietzsche type, can bear upon his single shoulders the whole reconstruction of a State. The machinery had to be controlled, the officers guided, the departments modelled, and the humblest clerk made to feel that he, too, was helping his State towards the ultimate goal of perfection. It is no detraction from the Maharaja's achievement, rather is it an enhancement of it, that he has been served by able men, who, if they do not lay claim to spectacular achievement or dramatic episode, can at least point to the steady progress of the State under the Maharaja's guidance during his fifty years of rule. The names of V. P. Madhav Rao, of Srinivasa Raghava Iyengar, of Romesh Chunder Dutt (cut off unhappily before his life's work was ended), and of Sir Manubhai Mehta, to name only a few of the distinguished Dewans, will long be gratefully remembered in Baroda. But there were others who in less exalted positions contributed to the well-being of the State, of whom it may be said that they

have no memorial:

who are perished as though they had never been born, but whose works have lasted even though they may be indistinguishable. For as the Maharaja himself pointed out in an eloquent speech:

'Every man has a definite place in society. Every one of us from the king to the pauper has to do his duty either as master or servant. . . . When we realize how very necessary every honest service is to society, we shall not fail to appreciate the equal importance of all services to society. On proper consideration it will be seen that no kind of work is humiliating or

degrading. Each of us, whether master or servant, mistress or maid, king or subordinate, has to do some work for the good of our kind. Supposing that a blade of grass can think, it may say, "I am insignificant, it is not necessary that I should be full grown". If all blades of grass thought in this way it would not be possible for animals who depend upon grass for their food to exist, and this in consequence would entail great loss on mankind.¹

To expect perfection is of course to expect the impossible. There are those who put self-interest first; there are those who are always clamouring for better pay, for promotion, for recognition of work in no way out of the ordinary; there are those who are unprofitable servants because they have done only that which is their duty to do, and there are those again who think no shame to cover up their laziness with an appearance of zeal. But there are others who, according to the light that is in them, have vied with the Maharaja himself in whole-hearted devotion to the State, whose sleeping and waking thoughts are only Baroda, and who but for this incessant preoccupation might, if the truth were told, have become more acceptable members of society by reason of a wider general knowledge. If it were not so, the Maharaja must have failed. And that is contrary to fact.

¹ *Speeches and Addresses*, vol. ii, pp. 421-8.

Chapter Seventeen

TO EUROPE

THE War over, the Maharaja set his face again towards Europe, and from that time onwards there was a regular series of visits, lasting sometimes for well over a year. The climate of Baroda is trying. December and January are glorious months when the keen sparkling air makes one feel that it is good to be alive; November, when the cold is approaching, and February, when it is gradually departing, are tolerable; but the heat of summer is intense, and when the rains at last break and the temperature is moderated, there is nothing to exhilarate in the prevailing damp. September and October are the most enervating of all. The breeze drops, and the sun shining through the damp atmosphere on to the damp earth gives the climate the character of a hot-house. The Maharaja loves the cold. St. Moritz with its brilliant sparkling sky and its keen air is his 'tried friend'. Hill-stations in India will serve if nothing better is to be had, but they are a poor substitute for the bracing climate of Europe. The stir of Europe, with its social attractions and its political distractions, appeals to his active mind. So long ago as 1895 he wrote to the then Resident, inviting him to Ootacamund, where 'there is more life, the meet of the hounds, the races, the At Homes, to keep the treadmill of society going'.¹ That is a feeling with which every Englishman in India can sympathize. The gaieties of the larger places, dear to the unsophisticated flapper who has there what she would call 'the time of her life', do not compensate for the exile—an exile which is at least as much of the mind as of the body—an exile which makes a man parochial in outlook, and which brings only faint echoes of the storm and stress of European life.

¹ *Selected Letters*, vol. i, No. 153, p. 115, dated 18.5.1895.

There is little to absorb the mind but the daily work which, to tell the truth, allows no leisure for anything else. There is many a man who would heartily endorse Mr. Aldous Huxley's opinion that the everlasting round of gaities makes, not a good, but an exceedingly bad time. And away from these larger places, life becomes even narrower. The pride of power, the exhilarations of riding and shooting which are within the reach of all, are some consolation for the soul-destroying routine of office-work to be followed by the hardly less rigid routine of games and chatter at the Club.

In Baroda there was little to distract the Maharaja. In his declining years he has lost something of that keen zest for riding which distinguished him in the prime of his manhood. The exigencies of his position make him always the Maharaja, and that to some extent he remains even in moments of relaxation. The close proximity of the officers, and especially of the Minister, gives him no relaxation from work, or at any rate from the overpowering preoccupation with Baroda affairs which has become a habit with him; and the constant brooding over the State has had, and still has, an effect upon his health.

The dislocations caused by the War had not been fully adjusted in the early part of 1919, and the Maharaja decided, as said above, to spend the hot weather in Kashmir. Srinagar proved too relaxing and he moved to Gulmarg, but he had not been there long before he received disquieting news of the health of his second son Jaisinh Rao. He hurried back to Baroda, and after consultation with the doctors he resolved to send the young man to Europe for treatment. For this reason, and because he himself had had an attack of rheumatic gout, the Maharaja followed his son, taking with him the Maharani, and Princess Shakuntala Raje, the wife of the sick Prince.

Marseilles was reached on the 9th October, and the

party immediately left for London. It had been the experience all through the later years of the War that accommodation in the many hotels was very difficult to obtain, partly no doubt, owing to the occupation of some of the larger ones by the Government for the purposes of the War. The congestion had not been fully relieved by the time His Highness arrived, and the party were hard put to it to find rooms. Eventually after some days spent at the Savoy, the Maharaja moved to Claridge's. Prince Jaisinh Rao began to improve in a nursing-home, but it was not thought advisable for the Maharaja to see him.

There had at first been no thought of prolonging the visit beyond November, but the rush for passages was so great that they could not be secured for a long time. In the meanwhile the doctors advised a rest-cure for the Maharaja, and the return to India was abandoned. On the 15th November the Maharaja and Maharani lunched with the King and Queen at Buckingham Palace, and subsequently dined with the Secretary of State for India (Mr. Montagu). Immediately afterwards the Maharaja retired to a nursing-home for his rest-cure, but he was barely installed there before a cable was received announcing the death of Princess Padmavati, the wife of the eldest son, Fateh Sinh Rao, and mother of the present heir apparent. The news was not altogether unexpected, for she had been ailing for some time past, and so far back as September the doctors had pronounced the disease to be cancer. But close on the heels of this cable arrived another announcing the sudden death of Shivaji Rao, the circumstances of which have already been described. The Maharaja's rest-cure was postponed. He returned to Claridge's, and immediately instructed the Dewan to do all that was possible for the widow and children. He sustained this crushing blow with fortitude, but the poor mother was

inconsolable. Luckily the Maharani of Cooch Bihar was able to join her mother and did her best to soothe her poignant grief.

The rest-cure was then resumed, but the Maharaja began to chafe under the enforced idleness and want of exercise. Under the doctor's advice he remained for a while, and then on the same advice went to St. Moritz. It was the off season, though the place was still under snow; the Maharaja practically had the hotel to himself, and the rest-cure was in some measure perforce prolonged. A short stay at Montreux and Lucerne completed the cure, and in May 1920 he returned to London.

But his somewhat restless temperament, especially when there is nothing to occupy his mind continuously or to keep him in one place, drove him to Eastbourne, and to Bath and Ilfracombe. It was owing to the unfortunate state of his health that he was unable to attend the Dinner which His Majesty's Government gave to the Princes of India at Lancaster House, or the return entertainment given by the Princes to the Prime Minister. Though the visit to Europe was in no way political, and though beyond one or two conversations with the Secretary of State political questions were not discussed, the presence of so important a Chief as the Maharaja Gaekwar of Baroda would have added distinction to both entertainments. His absence was unavoidable, and his reason beyond challenge.

He was, however, on the whole much better. In April he had written to the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford, that the enforced rest and regularity had been very beneficial, though they had turned his mind too much on himself and his health. He laid some stress on the latter:

'I have so far been practically an invalid and have not been able to get about and see things and places, but I hope to get fit enough to travel and look round a bit before the next cold

weather, when I am looking forward to coming out to India.’¹

The tone of this letter is significant. The old controversy which was raised by the Curzon Circular had been laid to rest; there was no longer any nervousness about the attitude of the Resident. The Government of India had gradually come to see things more as the Maharaja saw them—and though perhaps they still looked with some misgivings upon long absences from India, especially upon those which involved being in Europe, the old policy had been practically abandoned. Victory remained with the Maharaja; not that victory which comes from a yielding to pressure, but that less obtrusive and more indirect kind of victory which acknowledges, from whatever causes the acknowledgement may spring, that the contentions of an adversary are after all reasonable. Be this, however, as it may, the Princes were, in fact, no longer treated in the manner which had in earlier years so disgusted the Maharaja; the arguments remained the same on either side, but the sleeping dogs were allowed to lie.

II

The necessity of a permanent residence in England had been felt for some time, and the Maharaja now bought the Russells Estate near Watford, and also acquired Aldworth in Surrey, a place of some celebrity as the residence of Tennyson. Writing from Hertfordshire to Lord Tennyson, he invites him to visit the ‘Haunts of your distinguished father’, and adds, somewhat naïvely, that he cannot undertake to keep the house just as it was in Tennyson’s time, ‘as I may have to furnish the house according to my own wants and taste’.²

During this period of ill-health, His Highness had

¹ *Selected Letters*, vol. iii, No. 1791, p. 2018, dated 14.4.1920.

² *Ibid.*, vol. iii, No. 1802, p. 2024, dated 18.10.1920.

practically abandoned all State work for which he had made arrangements with the Council, but he was not able so easily to divest himself of family cares. Prince Jaisinh Rao, who had been removed to Charlottenburg, near Berlin, had so far improved that it was thought advisable to allow his wife and the Maharani to join him. A few more years of life were still granted to the young man. But the plight of the Prince was not the only domestic care that came upon the Maharaja. His anxiety for the widow and children of Shivaji Rao has been mentioned, and the son of Fateh Singh and heir to the throne, Pratap Singh, had since arrived in London with a view to his education in England. Later on Shivaji Rao's widow, Princess Kamala Devi, arrived with her children; and finally a letter came from his nephew, Abba Saheb, importuning His Highness for money. The young man was proposing partnership in a business firm at Ahmedabad, but appeals for money are never welcome to His Highness when he thinks that the applicant has already enough. The request was refused, and the young man was enjoined to try to join that illustrious company of men who had made their mark in the world without the aid of capital or influence.

On the 29th November the Maharaja had an audience of the King and Queen at Buckingham Palace, and then called at St. James's Palace on the Prince of Wales. There had been some idea that the Prince would visit India that year, and the Maharaja had sent a pressing invitation to the Secretary of State for India to include Baroda in the tour. The Prince, however, told His Highness that the project had for the time been abandoned, but he hoped to go out the following year. The Maharaja was able to renew his invitation personally.

Some evidence of the intention of this long absence is afforded, not only by the abortive attempts which the Maharaja had made to leave Europe earlier, but by his

inquiry of the Council whether he had better return to India at once or stay in Europe until he was completely recovered. The Council replied, as might have been expected, that things were going smoothly in the State. His Highness's presence was not urgently required, and that there was no pressing need for his immediate return. The urge was, however, upon him. His anxiety to see his people once more overcame his prudence; he resolved to return in spite of the Council, and paid for his decision by an attack of rheumatism which had not left him when he reached Bombay, so that a chair had to be used for the actual landing.

The Maharaja's stay in India did not last long. He had returned too late in the year. He would, indeed, have been wiser to have accepted the Council's opinion and completed the cure, for the next tour was one long quest in search of health. He began badly. The very modest retinue to which he had now grown accustomed was reduced by force of circumstances to one. The Secretary was already in Europe, the aides-de-camp sought and obtained permission to follow later. The result was that the only officer in attendance was the doctor, who did his best to combine all the roles. The Maharaja fell ill on board, and this added to the complications.

There followed, as has been said, a chase for health over Europe. First Lausanne, with the further discomfort that the Secretary, who had not been informed of a change of plans, waited at the appointed place, Geneva. A dentist of high reputation treated the Maharaja's teeth, and a doctor, Jeanneret, his other ailments. Next, after excursions in the vicinity of Lausanne, Vichy. Here the waters did not agree with the patient; the place was hot, especially hot, as it happened, that year. There were the usual attractions of a watering-place, but the lassitude that came over the Maharaja left him little inclination for

any of them. La Bourboule in the Auvergne was recommended by some French friends; it was quiet and the air was bracing. But the quiet deepened into dullness, and the promise of bracing air was illusory.

In spite of these depressing experiences, the party managed to beguile the time in expeditions and in such novelties as the Battle of Flowers at Vichy. On one of the expeditions in Switzerland he had what must have been an unusual experience for an Indian traveller. His car stuck in the snow and could move neither forward nor backward. With great difficulty it was at last induced to go back, but the road was too narrow to admit of turning, and as it followed the contour of the mountains with a precipice on one side, the party had an anxious time in the face of the blinding snow-storm which had come on. The Italian chaffeur, however, rose to the occasion and richly deserved the subsequent tea at Gstaad, which must have been more than usually grateful.

Baroda was ever in his mind, but the authorities in India contrived to send as little work as possible. The Maharaja, with his usual eye to possible hints for his State, took advantage of his enforced stay in Switzerland to make some inquiries about the Swiss Constitution. His notes were fragmentary and, of necessity, incomplete, but the similarity at some points between the relations of the Cantons to the Federal Government, and those between the Indian States and the Government of India, can hardly have been lost upon him. He discovered that the Cantons were 'sovereign except in matters on which they have delegated the power to the Confederation'.

These powers included, as in India, the declaration of war and making of peace, posts and telegraphs, coinage and issue of notes, manufacture of ammunition, customs, and railways. There are of course important differences. The Cantonal arrangement was made with the consent

of the whole nation; it was not imposed from without, nor does it rest upon treaties. The right of coinage was surrendered altogether, and no question could arise about railway jurisdiction. But the principle upon which these powers were centred in the Federal Government was very similar to that on which the Government of India has acted, that these were matters which concerned the country as a whole, and that the differences of State legislation could only tend towards confusion and dislocation.

Whatever may have been the Maharaja's reflections on these similarities, it does not appear that they were practically applied. His mind was bent upon getting well. The impatience which was apparent to his staff, and which was specifically attributed by the experts to his general ill-health, was on the increase, and with it the restlessness which could never be content to stay for long anywhere. From La Bourboule he went to Paris, and thence by aeroplane to London. This was a new experience. Aviation had made enormous strides during the war, and although it was not without misgiving that his staff saw a life so precious to them and to Baroda being risked in the air, the voyage was achieved without mishap. But England, though it offered him the comfort of his own home, specially arranged for him by the thoughtful care of Mr. Horne, his English solicitor, could not keep him long. A banquet at Buckingham Palace to meet the King of the Belgians, a dinner at Guildhall, and an informal party at the Athenaeum were the chief events of a stay which lasted rather less than three weeks.

He flew back to Paris and returned to Lausanne. His depression continued with brighter intervals, and he then yielded to the persuasions of the Maharani, who had joined the party, to visit Berlin. The chronicle has left us an interesting impression of that city after the war, all the more interesting because the staff, not knowing any

German, were in blissful ignorance of the upheaval that might at any moment burst through the surface in the German capital. There was a general air of deterioration. The nobles (Adelheit) were depressed, and the traders were taking their place. Every one blamed the Kaiser. Communism was working underground. The place was a smouldering volcano.

These things hardly touched the Indian party, who enjoyed the innocence of ignorance. Once Their Highnesses were warned to avoid a particular street and were advised to go back to the hotel, as there was to be a Communist demonstration, but in no other way was the Maharaja brought into contact with German politics. He was only concerned with German doctors who would have nothing to do with drugs and waters, and prescribed rest and a cool climate for nerves which had been overstrained by the work and anxieties of previous years.

Interlaken and the Jungfrau were the next venture, but again the Maharaja found little to attract him apart from the opportunities of walking. Caux, Montreux, and Paris followed in quick succession, with a tour over the battlefields of France. And so to Marseilles and India. Once on board his restlessness left him. The enforced quiet with just that modicum of work that serves to keep the mind busy, agreeable companionship, and perhaps, too, the thought of seeing his beloved Baroda once more, did more than all the doctors of Europe with their drugs, their waters, and their rest-cures had been able to accomplish. For all that, the Maharaja was his own worst enemy, yet not he, but the demon of unrest which drove him from place to place with bewildering frequency. Except at the beginning of the tour, when he spent two rather unhappy months at Lausanne and Vichy, he never stayed more than a few days anywhere. In his A.D.C., Captain Pawar, who is the laughing philo-

sopher of Baroda, he had a lively companion; Dr. Mayer supplied the interest of serious conversation, but even two swallows do not make a summer! Rest was what was chiefly needed, the quiet of a settled life, surrounded by agreeable company. The Maharaja was never long enough in any one place to obtain either the one or the other. The distraction of acquaintances could not take the place of the society of friends. England, where he had a home and many friends, was the only place where he could have had both rest and society, but unfortunately the English climate did not suit him, or his physical condition persuaded him that it did not. The voyage brought him what his eight months' quest had failed to find, and his staff delightedly exclaimed that he looked more 'like Hubert' than he had looked for the last ten years.

On the 23rd November 1921 the Prince of Wales arrived in Baroda for a two days' visit as the guest of the Maharaja. It is matter of history that the Prince's reception in British India had been none too cordial, and although it was vehemently declared that no affront was intended to the Prince's person, it must have been some relief to him to exchange the tension of Bombay for the freedom of Baroda. The Maharaja had given up Lakshmi Vilas Palace to the Prince, and himself retired to Makarpura. The time was occupied by the usual formalities, varied by a garden-party and a buck-hunt with hunting cheetas, which though not unique is a characteristic feature of Baroda entertainment. At the customary State banquet His Highness dwelt upon the loyalty of his House to the King-Emperor, and the alliance of Baroda with the Crown, which had endured for a century. The Prince replied with equal cordiality, paying a well-merited tribute to the Maharaja's 'enlightened policy', which 'has now perfected an advanced and orderly administration

based on British models'.¹ It would be, he said, 'the most pleasant of my Baroda memories' that he had made the closer acquaintance of His Highness. A special touch was added to a ceremony which usually follows more or less well-worn lines by the Prince's announcement of the engagement of Princess Mary, the Countess of Harewood, an event which 'throughout her life and mine will be associated with the first day of my visit to Baroda, the first Indian State which I have had the pleasure of seeing'.¹

He left on the 24th, and immediately telegraphed his warm thanks for the hospitality shown him and assured the Maharaja that he 'took away the most pleasant memories of his stay in Baroda'. A letter followed in which the Prince made graceful allusion to his host's courtesy in giving up Lakshmi Vilas Palace for his use.

On the 1st April 1922 the Maharaja again set sail, and once more sought elusive health in Europe. One tour is very much like another :

Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.

A renewed visit to Berlin, however, had in it a touch of the melancholy, for here was Jaisinh Rao still fighting for his life, and soon to pass away in tragic circumstances. The Maharaja still passed from place to place; the habit was seemingly incurable. But though he has generally shown a preference for Paris, it is probably in London that time flies quickest. For there is, after all, except to the insatiable American tourist, a limit to the pleasure of rather aimless and unprofitable sightseeing. The sights of our unwieldy but rather homely capital are as familiar to the Maharaja as to any Englishman, but here in London there were many friends to be seen and entertained, there were official and ceremonial calls to be made, perhaps also business, His Highness's chief pleasure, to be done

¹ *Baroda State Administration Report*, 1921-2, p. 26.

with the Secretary of State for India. If the amusements lack the vivacity and artistic finish of French productions, at least they are carried on in a tongue which can be followed by the whole Indian party without mental effort. There are shops to be visited, and, perhaps most of all to his liking, institutions to be inspected which may carry more probable germs of ideas for a State which is so largely modelled upon British institutions. With all that, his demon soon drove His Highness to Belgium, and he stayed a few days in Brussels. But the stay was quickly cut short by alarming news of his son-in-law, the Maharaja of Cooch Bihar. He hurried to London, but was only just in time to receive news of his death and to be able to console his daughter. He and his staff attended the funeral, and the remainder of his stay in London was occupied with family affairs.

This event made him change his plans. He had meant to return to Baroda in January 1924, but now decided to winter in Europe, and nowhere could he find a more suitable place than his old friend, St. Moritz. It was some evidence of returning health that now, in his sixtieth year, he was moved to learn to skate.

But when the season is over St. Moritz becomes impossible. Monte Carlo was the next halt, and so to Italy. Rome was not new to him, but he brushed up his acquaintance with her many memories. The good offices of the British Ambassador procured him an interview with the King of Italy, and also—what he valued equally—quite a long talk with Mussolini. The work of the Dictator in restoring Italy to a place of respect among the nations, when apparently her impressionable people were preparing to tread the primrose path of Bolshevism, had a peculiar fascination for him.

Of Rome he wrote characteristically to his Dewan, Sir Manubhai Mehta:

'I have been here for the last three days. I have enjoyed renewing my acquaintance with the old sights of Rome, the fragmentary remains of a powerful State that has influenced the civilization of the world. Christendom has raised its monumental buildings in Rome out of the Roman or Pagan buildings which have been destroyed by man and nature. The Greek and Roman civilization has exerted great influence in moulding the destinies of the world and especially Europe. The remains of art and literature are so fine that one wonders at the sight of them.' ¹

And thence by way of Florence, Venice, and Lake Garda into the Austrian Tyrol. The tour was a great success. The Maharaja was in good spirits; the staff was small and manageable, and there was no fixed programme. But Berlin was calling in the person of Prince Jaisinh Rao, and the Maharaja was anxious to consult his German doctors about himself. Opportunity was, however, taken of visiting many German institutes, and notes were sent to Baroda on the expenses of training students in electric works, and pictures of the special measures adopted in Germany for the physical culture of youth since the abolition of conscription. July was spent in Czechoslovakia and Austria, and in August the party returned to St. Moritz. They had not long been established there before the terrible news arrived from Flushing of the death of Prince Jaisinh Rao. The party immediately left for Paris.

In a long life one must expect bereavements, but Fate seemed to have been specially unkind to the Maharaja. Not only had he lost his first wife prematurely, and his elder brother long before the allotted human span, but his three eldest sons, all of whom might reasonably have been expected to survive him, had now gone. He had but recently lost his son-in-law, and by the death of his daughter-in-law the young Prince Pratap Singh was early

¹ Unpublished letter to Sir Manubhai Mehta, Dewan, dated 8.4.1923.

left an orphan. Prince Jaisinh Rao had never been strong, and for four years he had been under treatment in Germany, but no one expected so tragic a conclusion to his young life.

The body was taken to the Royal waiting-room at Flushing Station. Thence it was conveyed to Paris, where a kindly Indian resident gave it shelter, and in his house it lay in state covered with the ochre flag of the Gaekwar State. Unfortunately there were defects in the necessary formalities, and the aid of the British Embassy was invoked, with the result that all difficulties were speedily removed and at 10 a.m. the last honours were paid to the dead Prince. A cortège of the whole Indian colony and the personal staff followed the coffin to the historic cemetery of Père la Chaise, but the Maharaja was too overcome by grief, and too stunned by the shock, to go. The ashes were eventually sent to India, where they were finally laid to rest with the appropriate Hindu rites.

The party left again for St. Moritz, where the season was now drawing to a close. The Maharaja was not seeking gaiety, but the hotels were putting up their shutters and he had to leave. After a short stay in Montreux and Paris, he went on to London, where the distractions of social engagements, which included visits to the Prince of Wales and Lord Peel, the Secretary of State, served to keep him from brooding overmuch on the devastating blow he had so lately received.

The voyage was uneventful. At Bombay, however, the rather unusual step was taken by several communities of presenting addresses, and the compliment was the greater in that they did not come from the State of Baroda but from the city of Bombay. A large number of similar addresses awaited him in Baroda, where he could not avoid the necessity of a reply as he had been able to do in Bombay, where he met the deputations informally. He

delivered a characteristic speech in open Durbar, in which all the old convictions, all the old ideals appeared with unabated vigour:

'We have to move forward with the times. Our progress will be slow indeed if we do not cultivate the virtues of fearlessness and the possession of the courage of our convictions. You will always remember that progress does not mean mere imitation. It should be solid and substantial advancement along right lines. Do not be led away by shows or phantoms. Study your own environment and place before your eyes the ideals you have in view. Having patiently and steadily decided upon definite lines of progress for yourselves, proceed without hesitation, steadily, unwearily.'¹

The condition of the depressed classes had for years been a favourite subject with him. He was, indeed, recognized as the foremost champion in his own order and perhaps among the general leaders of Indian advanced thought, in his earnest pleading for the outcaste masses, and in his denunciation of the cruelty and tyranny of caste. Once more he appealed to his people:

'Amongst us large communities, as many as seven crores (or seventy million) of human beings rank low in the social scale and are regarded as untouchable. Our progress is no progress at all if we refuse to extend the feeling of equality and brotherly kindness on the same lines to the Antyajias and the backward communities. We have to bring into play all the courage of our convictions, all our sense of brotherhood, and in our private lives break these shackles of superstition and tradition. Men like Gandhi and his followers have done and said much about the uplifting of the status of the depressed classes. If they have failed, it is the people who have failed to adopt his wise counsel. It is they who are to blame. It is for the people to act up to the wise dictates preached to them with so much conviction, and boldly to bring into being a feeling of equality and brotherly love. Then only will they solve one of our most difficult problems.'²

¹ *Speeches and Addresses*, vol. ii, p. 475.

² *Ibid.*, p. 476.

He justified his stay in Europe by the plea that, since the Great War had revolutionized the social and political outlook there, it was necessary for those who tried to march with the times to study the conditions on the spot, for 'other countries are moving fast and we cannot afford to stand still'. The long stay in Europe had brought the Maharaja back to Baroda in good health, but the climate of his own capital seems always to upset him. Out of the five months which he spent there between the return to India and his next voyage to Europe he was not well for more than twenty days. Even when he travelled to Benares to deliver the convocation address to the University of which he was Chancellor, gout overtook him and the address had to be read by the Dewan, as the Maharaja was unable to attend in person. The address was characteristically outspoken. The Maharaja is an ardent admirer of all that is good in Hinduism, and an ardent champion of that progress which shall enable Hindustan to take—or shall we say resume?—her place among the nations of the earth. He has never been tired of preaching, in season and out of season, that that progress will never come until India has learned to cast away all those later fetters in which social custom has bound her. He gave in outline the story of the ancient Hindu Universities; he appealed for 'a vigorous and practical determination to cope with the difficulties of the present'; he alluded to the need for research work, and for the education of priests; he pleaded for the better treatment of lower castes, and he warned his audience that in the struggle for political freedom 'there can be no rights, no privileges, no genuine freedom without corresponding duties, obligations, and self-restraint'.¹ Practical service, he declared to men who had too long been content with words, is far more patriotic than mere eloquence, and the

¹ Ibid., p. 1191.

freedom which becomes licence is 'worse than the most rigorous tyranny'.

The vigorous defence of foreign travel came appositely from one who had spent by far the greater part of the preceding four years in going from place to place in Europe, and was about to undertake another long tour:

'Yet another matter which I desire to place before you for consideration is concerned with foreign travel. It is, I think, most important that we should encourage our people to travel abroad, to make themselves acquainted with other lands, other races, other cultures. Why have we acquired the dislike to travel over the seas? . . . This medieval attempt of ours to keep ourselves in dignified seclusion has cost us more than we shall ever know. The proverbial toad in the well had not its vision more confined than have those who refuse to contemplate the pulsing life of the countries over seas. Intercourse with the great trading nations is necessary to us for the extension of our resources, for the enlargement of our horizon, and for the recovery of that initiative which we are said to have lost. Let us go abroad again to recover it. Some will reply that there are many Indians of a world-wide reputation for their great gifts in all branches of intellectual achievement whose knowledge of other countries has been based on their reading or on information derived at second hand from others. I cordially agree. But I am convinced that, had they added to their natural talents the breadth of mind and elasticity of imagination which must result from travel, from personal experience and observation of the manners and customs of other nations, they must have increased enormously their powers for good.'¹

The Maharaja had not intended to stay more than a week in Benares, but he lingered there for over a month, either under compulsion of his enemy or under the spell of the sacred city, which has peculiar fascination for all Hindus. On his return to Baroda he could not shake off the gout, and his doctors advised another journey to Europe. The

¹ *Speeches and Addresses*, vol ii, p. 493.

sea air at once had its usual good effect. Office work was resumed, and by the time Marseilles was reached, His Highness was more like his normal self. The tour was very much on the old plan, but there were new sights to be seen, and new experiences to be gained. Baroda was never far from the Maharaja's thoughts, and the chronicler of this tour records with chagrin how at the most exciting period of the tennis tournament at Evian les Bains he was called upon to pace up and down behind the rows of eager spectators while the Maharaja delivered a dissertation on the 'methods of administration and general Statecraft'. The experience was by no means unique. At all kinds of odd moments, at the theatre, or the races, in the middle of the night, or in the course of an interesting conversation a thought will strike the Maharaja, and out comes the note-book which the A.D.C. or other officer in attendance is expected to carry. 'Rarely', says the report, 'does he fail to visit an institution which is likely to teach him something new.' Thus it was that on this tour he visited the Pasteur Institute in Paris, where the original instruments used by Pasteur are kept; and even more instructive was the Railway Colony at Tergnier, a French effort, like that of Messrs. Lever and others in England, to bridge the gulf which separates employers and employed. The Railway Colony of Baroda, which provides quarters for officers and staff, and has a recreation club of its own, is the outcome of the Maharaja's observation, if not at Tergnier, then during his many tours in European lands.

India was now calling, and the stay in Paris, where the Maharaja entertained Lord and Lady Crewe, and was entertained by them in turn, was meant to be the last. But Fate and the doctors willed otherwise. Fate and the doctors proved to be right, and the prolonged stay in Europe procured freedom from the old enemy for many

months. The Maharaja resigned himself to a winter in Europe, and engaged a French lady, Mlle Lux, to teach him French. The Maharaja has for many years heartily endorsed the European belief in the refining influence of the innocent intercourse of the sexes. He can see no sense in the older Indian ideas—now happily passing away—that woman is to be kept in subjection, turned into a household drudge, and kept in a seclusion which leaves her as companions only other women as uneducated as herself. He has in word and deed steadily supported the Maharani's praiseworthy efforts towards the emancipation of Indian women which will enable them to take their proper place in society. Like all virile men, His Highness delights in ladies' society which brings him into contact with the female point of view. For Queen Victoria, the revered of all Indians, he had a special respect, and even affection; and in Europe, where the women are as free as the men, he was able to gratify his taste for feminine society to the full.

Before he left Paris he arranged to buy a house in the Avenue Van Dyck in one of the best parts of the city, which is still in his possession, but a more serious matter intervened before he could leave for London. On the 24th April he invited to lunch two Indian friends, who had just arrived from India. On the boat as a fellow passenger was the Maharaja of Gwalior, Madhav Rao Sindhia, who in the course of the voyage had developed a carbuncle, and according to the Maharaja's guests was now lying in Marseilles in a very serious condition. His Highness at once offered help. Every day he called once or twice to inquire after his brother Maratha Prince, and he would not have been the man he is if he had not followed up these ineffectual visits with more practical help. He sent his own doctor to help at the sick-bed, but in spite of his sympathetic attentions, and in spite of

all that the best doctors in Paris could do, the end came quickly. On the 5th June Maharaja Sindhia died. On that afternoon and evening His Highness remained with the stricken widow and children to comfort and console, and he joined the Maharaja of Kapurthala in doing the last honours to the dead Prince.

So far had the sea and Europe combined to restore the Maharaja's health, that on his return to London he was able to take a more active part in its social functions. He gave a large garden-party at the house at Watford, where he met and freely conversed with his many guests, the most distinguished of whom was Lord Birkenhead. His appearance seems to have disconcerted some of them. 'To the ordinary Britisher', says the Chronicle, 'an Indian ruler is a novel sight and many of the guests had come with expectation of seeing a huge Potentate wearing a large turban and bedecked with jewels. But what they actually saw was a charming man dressed discreetly as an ordinary gentleman with perfect manners and an engaging personality.' The historian may be allowed to endorse this reflection with the single exception of the word 'huge'. His Highness is not a Nubian.

The day ended with a Conservative meeting at Watford which Lord Birkenhead was to address. The Maharaja, who was enthusiastically received, made, on invitation, an extempore speech, a species of oratory in which he excels, and the occasion is noteworthy as he seldom or never enters into English politics. His relations with Lord Birkenhead were particularly happy. A formal call at the India Office resulted in a 'very pleasant and cordial interview', and later on the Maharaja gave the Secretary of State a successful dinner at the Carlton. Less fortunate was his attendance at a reception at Buckingham Palace, for though the private audience passed off pleasantly, the Maharaja in his state of health found very fatiguing the

long formality of the general reception at which he had to stand in company with the Royal Family.

A visit to Evian for the usual cure, and a trip into Spain, where the Maharaja saw—and disapproved—the national sport, brought him back to London in September. The time was not long distant when his party could safely sail once more for India, and a good deal of business had to be crowded into it. A consultation with his solicitors on the cost of buying, repairing, and maintaining the two properties of Russells in Hertfordshire and Aldworth in Surrey, and a comparison of these expenses with the use that was made of the houses, led to the conclusion that the game was not worth the candle, and the Maharaja decided to sell both. Aldworth he had not used, though a happy inspiration induced him to offer it to the Poetry Society for one of their meetings—an offer which in view of Tennyson's connexion with the place was gratefully accepted. But he had grown fond of Russells, and it was not without a sigh that he closed with an advantageous offer. Aldworth did not fetch the price asked, and at the time of writing it is still in the market.

The conviction is forced upon the reader of these various chronicles that, whatever may be the attractions of the Continent, whatever the pleasures of travel, and whatever the advantages of climate, the true home of the Maharaja in Europe is England. Granted that Baroda is always in his thoughts wherever he is, and that he has made many pleasant acquaintances abroad, it is in England that he meets the largest circle of his friends, both Indian and English. There he can enjoy the society of all grades, from His Majesty and his distinguished servants down to and beyond those more obscure people who have in one capacity or another at one time served the State of Baroda. The exchange of ideas with sympathetic and understanding men and women is to a man of the Maha-

raja's temperament the most soothing of medicines. He can talk art with his friend Mr. Spielmann, politics and India with the Secretary of State for India and others whom he knows; he can discuss Baroda with men who are still serving or have recently served there; and recall memories with such bygone servants as Colonel Meade, his erstwhile Resident. A quiet and regular life with pleasant company and real conversation is worth to an active mind such as his more than all the sight-seeing of Europe, and though no one wishes to deny the Maharaja a change, or to enforce upon him the London fog when St. Moritz is beckoning, it is permissible to doubt whether the restless pursuit of relaxation and rest, which always elude capture, is not more harmful in the long run than the eccentricities of the English climate. The days were long past when the Maharaja in the heyday of his powers lay under the frown of the Government of India and the India Office. If the Press on the death of Jaisinh Rao had recalled, in varying degrees of asperity, incidents that belonged to those clouded times, they were buried now in oblivion. The King's reception of his visitor had always been cordial; the Prince of Wales had been a guest at Baroda; Lord Birkenhead had been entirely friendly.

The work in Baroda had of course been going steadily on. Such work as it was thought expedient to send to Europe was regularly dispatched, and the Dewan and others kept His Highness informed of the progress of affairs by means of the letters which have been prescribed for the purpose. The work done was, therefore, light. The Maharaja kept and still keeps a controlling hand over Baroda affairs, but the bulk of the work is done in the first instance by the Dewan in Council, and it is only when the Maharaja seriously questions the wisdom of a decision that he intervenes. He reserves to himself the higher sovereign powers as his right, but those most frequently

used are in connexion with matters of policy. This arrangement enables him to take full advantage of his European tours, whether in the direction of health or of relaxation, or of the observation of things useful to the State. He himself lays great stress on leaving officers in high authority leisure to consider large schemes, which they cannot have if they are overwhelmed with a multiplicity of detail.

Chapter Eighteen

SOCIAL REFORM

SOCIAL reform is just one of those lines of activity in which the Indian State has an advantage over British India. In the case of an alien Government, whose outlook on life and whose standards of value differ so profoundly from those of the governed, their understanding of the people must necessarily be limited; and even this limited knowledge is apt to be coloured by European preconceptions. It is, for example, perfectly easy to realize the fact of immature marriage, but it is extremely difficult to appreciate the depth of feeling aroused by what to the English mind seems the most innocuous measure in respect of it.

It requires imagination to foresee that measures designed to correct obvious abuses may raise a storm of opposition from outraged Hindu sentiment. When Lord Morley asked the English in India to get into the Indian skin, he was asking the impossible; sympathy there is in plenty, but an exact coincidence of ideas there can never be.

The Raja of an Indian State who is conscientiously working for the good of his people is under far less disadvantage. He knows them, he is one of them. Brought up in the same atmosphere of social custom and subject to the same influences, he is able to sympathize with the people's susceptibilities, and to understand the motives for and the strength of, resistance to proposed measures. But he cannot ride rough-shod over the traditions of centuries. He too must feel his way cautiously, coaxing here, suggesting there, now boldly coercing, now gradually leading towards the desired goal. No object was dearer to the Maharaja of Baroda than the social and religious reform of his people. To a mind philosophically

inclined and already intolerant of priestly chicanery, were added the inestimable advantages of foreign travel and contact with many and varied forms of civilization. He pondered over the prosperity and enlightenment of the West, and contrasted it with the poverty and ignorance of his own people; and his patriotic pride rose in revolt against the thought that the country which had produced the great Shivaji and Mahadji Rao Sindhia should take such a lowly place in the estimation of the world. That economic forces were at work he was not concerned to deny, and when he set himself to face the economic question he was never so foolish as to indulge in vain recriminations, or to blame the Western nations for what was in effect the inevitable march of events. The remedy, he perceived, was to organize and encourage industries, so that India might at last rival the economic competitors whom she could never hope to destroy.

But it was not by the economic possibilities alone that the Maharaja's desire for social reform was awakened. Ignorance was at the bottom of all the evils which must be cured if India was to take rank among the more advanced civilizations of the world. The people were illiterate; they were steeped in superstition; they clung to the old traditions and the old customs largely because they knew no better, and those who should have been their guides and teachers had not that breadth of knowledge to advise them what was good and what was bad, and to correct the ancient ways of their forefathers by the light of modern research and modern progress. India lived in the dead past, and not even in a universal past but in a past of her own peculiar creation. The Maharaja was no champion of revolution. He 'stood for a modern civilization against the deadening effects and the evils of medieval and ancient traditions and customs based upon erroneous conceptions of life and the world'. The ignor-

ance which laid its dead hand upon every effort for the general advancement of the people could only be overcome by education. Yet the education, even of the male, was only partial and ineffective, and female education was almost entirely neglected. Surely a nation which kept one half of its people in darkness had no right to expect progress. How could the sons flourish when the mothers by whom their early life was shaped were themselves wholly ignorant? And so the measures of social reform in the State were largely directed towards the emancipation of women, to restoring to India that rational freedom which was the heritage of the ancient days and which only the degenerate custom of lesser men had denied to her.

These then were the ideals. To reject the new light and to cling blindly to primitive traditions was, in the Maharaja's view, suicidal. The people of India were 'ignorantly mistaking the form for the ideal'. They must learn to interpret Nature, not by the light of outworn superstition, but by the new and living light of science, whether it came from the West or from the East. They must broaden their horizon, and recognize that they can no longer be sufficient to themselves. They must purify and rationalize their religion, and learn that the path to salvation lies not in 'bathing in the Ganges or paying money to Brahmans, but in right conduct and the purification of the soul'. Nor should they despair. Some might acknowledge with envy the superiority of Europe and be content with their own inferiority, judging that it was useless to strive after the unattainable. But the Maharaja has never wanted courage; courage and determination have often pulled him through when a weaker spirit would have abandoned the field to the forces of reactionary opposition.

II

It needed courage to oppose the priesthood with their sacerdotal arrogance and their vested interests. Quite early in his career, in 1896, he crossed swords with them on a question of ritual. There are in Maharashtra two systems for the performance of rites and ceremonies, known respectively as Vedokta, according to the Vedas, and Puranokta, according to the Puranas. The arrogance of the Brahmans, who are not inferior in this respect to priestly castes whether in Rome or England, in Palestine or Arabia, insisted that to them alone belonged the privilege of using the higher and holier sacrament, that of the Vedas, on the ground that though originally the privilege was shared by the other 'twice-born' castes, they had disappeared from the earth and only the contemptible Sudras remained. The position was peculiar to Maharashtra, because the Puranokta system had been introduced by a Maratha and had taken root there but nowhere else in the country. In earlier times the whole country was convulsed by this resounding dispute, just as in the young centuries of the Christian era the Eastern Empire was convulsed by the question of an iota. Even the great Shivaji was obliged to summon a conference to settle the point; the obsequious or learned Brahmans decided in his favour, and he was crowned with Vedic rites.¹

This controversy, whatever it may be worth—and it is not for an infidel to pronounce—has been going on ever since, with more or less acrimony according to the custom in such matters. The Maharaja studied the question for himself, and insisted that rites and ceremonies should be performed in the royal household according to the Vedic

¹ The authority for this is chiefly the *Marathi Life of His Highness*, by Sardesai.

system. He confided the results of his inquiries to his old tutor, Mr. Elliot:

‘For myself you will hardly guess what I am engaged upon just now. Can you imagine me in the light of a rectifier of religious abuses? I fear however my motive is not religious but much more social. I have for sometime been gathering information about the religious ceremonies performed in the palace, and I find that of the two ceremonial types, the Vedic and the Puranic, the one being of a higher and purer sanction according to our scale of authorities, the other a corruption of more priestly times, our ceremonies conform to the latter. This, however, is the result of an imposture. For I find from papers belonging to the times of the old Maharajas that they fully believed the forms to be Vedic. Even now people who do not know Sanskrit have very little protection against dupery in these matters and to hoodwink those old people, buried in ignorance, superstition and military affairs was considerably easier.’¹

But as he said, it was not the religious significance of such rites that had moved him to act; it was rather his hatred of quackery, of duplicity, of priestly intolerance and heartless greed that led him to insist on reform:

‘The priests versed in sordid and selfish motives will stoop to any dodge which will bring them money, and relying on the general ignorance, do not scruple to back up their practices by the merest lies. When questioned, they pretend that everything is done and repeated according to Vedas; but when questioned more closely, they fall back on the less obvious lie that the ceremonies are a mixture of the two.’¹

For himself he did not, or professed not to, care; he had a horror of cant; he regarded with unfathomable scorn, which many of us will share, that type of priestcraft which Chaucer lashed with his bitter laughter. He could defend himself, but it moved him to indignation

¹ *Selected Letters*, vol. i, No. 251, p. 195, dated 12.10.1896.

to see his people imposed upon and cheated by false airs of sanctimoniousness.

‘Personally of course I have very few religious preferences, and really could not say whether I think the Vedas more authoritative or the Bible or the Koran or the Avesta. But socially the people attach a high importance to these ceremonies. It is a great pity that they are so sunk in ritual as never to understand the principles of their religion. In their apathy they fall in blindly with the interested inventions of the priests. It is with this view that I want to make a change.’¹

In this particular matter he had his way in the Palace, but Brahmanical influence seems to have been too strong, or inborn reverence for tradition was too deeply rooted, to permit any serious change in the attitude of the people. His Highness, however, was not content to let the matter rest there. A chance question which he asked of the family priest as to the meaning of certain things revealed the complete ignorance of the holy father, and the Maharaja asked himself, not without a smile, what good it was to perform rites and ceremonies which the priest himself did not understand. He began to make his own inquiries, much to the disgust even of his own relatives, to whom in the simplicity of their orthodoxy it was little less than sacrilege even to examine the deeds and the dogmas of the forefathers. They called him a free-thinker, or in more contemptuous language an atheist. But he went his way unmoved, and under his directions a book was compiled by a learned Maratha Brahman, one Shanker Moro Ranade, assisted by other learned Pundits and Shastris, which gave an exhaustive account of all the religious ceremonies performed in the Royal family.

It is difficult in these days, when Europe is in a Laodicean frame of mind, to appreciate the strength which even the outward observances of religion had over the

¹ *Selected Letters*, vol. i, No. 251, p. 195; dated 12.10.1896.

minds of the people. The scene of Canossa might have been enacted a hundred times in India; and the claims of an Innocent and a Boniface would have been easily acknowledged as their just due. Severe penances were exacted for offences, to our modern thought incredibly venial. The appalling credulity of the people induced them to look upon the priestly caste as the perfect sons of God when they were, in fact, the very imperfect sons of men. To give alms to the Brahmans, to feed them on ceremonial occasions, to lavish money upon the useless ornaments of temples, to perform pilgrimages in search of wealth or a son, which often ended in the gratification of the greedy priests and in the disappointment of the votary—these were, and to a great extent still are, the acknowledged ways of pleasing God and the road to salvation. Pollution came not from the north or the south; it was all around you, and your life was harassed by the ever-present fear of penance. You could not sit down to dinner with a near relative if you had any doubts of his orthodoxy.

The Maharaja had to conform to such customs as these and, indeed, felt the weight of them. His early visits to Europe were, it is said, a source of profit to certain gentlemen who knew as much of Europe as they knew of the moon, or perhaps not quite so much. He had to give way on more than one occasion to the religious prejudice of the orthodox which inflicted a penance for foreign travel.¹ But he persisted, and by his determination and example he has converted all educated Baroda to the lasting advantage of everybody concerned.

There was nothing in all this to suggest that he had lost faith in Hinduism, or that he doubted its potentiality for good upon the minds of the people if rightly

¹ Life by Sardesai. He also declares that the orthodox refused to break bread with the Maharaja, but the accuracy of the statement is disputed.

understood. 'Nothing', he said to a friend (March 1896), 'brings this peace of mind more home to the suffering multitude than a good faith.'¹ War was declared not upon religion, but upon the degradation of it:

'We in India have a hereditary class, or more correctly caste, which is pitifully short of our present aspirations, needs and requirements. . . . The great majority of our children go without any religious teaching, and pick up mere forms, by simple observation. I wish to teach my children the good principles of religion; and therefore I shall be thankful if you can send or mention to me the names of such books as may help my object.'¹

His correspondent was an English clergyman, who then knew little or nothing of India, and the last sentence illustrates the equanimity of the Maharaja towards religion. The reply is not recorded, nor does it appear that the young Princes were instructed in the writings of Augustine and Chrysostom, of Newman or of Wesley.

It was at this period—actually a little earlier in date—that commotion occurred about the distribution of doles, to which allusion has already been made. The profusion of Pundits and Shastris, learned men not to be confounded with the common herd, whose main idea was to stuff their pockets and fill their bellies, gave ample scope for speculation and corruption to those to whom was entrusted the care of the Maharaja's hospitality. One of these was flatly accused by a clerk, and though he was acquitted, the loss of public confidence combined with his hesitation to carry out the Maharaja's reforms caused his downfall. At that time one Rajaram Shastri Tople was on comparatively intimate terms with the Maharaja in matters concerning religion. But when the Maharaja asked him point-blank to perform the ceremonies according to the Vedokta system he temporized, saying that he would do

¹ *Selected Letters*, vol. i, No. 249, p. 191, dated March 1896.

so if the Maharaja performed a particular sacrifice which he knew he either could not or would not perform. His resignation took Baroda by surprise. Meetings were convened and resolutions were passed, but the Maharaja was inflexible. He looked about and found a substitute in one Mohite whose methods seem to have been unpopular with the people, though he was made of sterner stuff than his predecessors. The flames of the Vedokta controversy flared up. The Pundits and Shastris would have threatened Papal excommunication had the country been medieval Europe; as it was they resolved not to take food with those who supported the royal pretensions. Gujeratis and Marwaris were more pliant, but the Gaekwar family comes from the Deccan, and the ladies of the family with feminine conservatism and feminine devotion to the priesthood, not only stoutly opposed the reform, but also objected to the introduction of the strangers. But the resolution of the Maharaja prevailed. Fiery denunciation, pulpit revilings, abuse, and even insult left him unmoved, and the reform was introduced into the Palace.

The ideal which was before him in these dealings with the priests was to abolish senseless distinctions between man and man, and to place religious practice upon a more rational basis. It seemed to him absurd that if it was right to worship in a particular way, it was fair to relegate inferior castes to inferior modes. Different races had different methods of worship. The Protestant Christian adored the Christ, the Catholics added the Virgin and the saints; the Deism of Islam preferred the more abstract conception of Allah. But every religion culminated in the idea of a universal all-pervading Spirit, and each race worshipped that Spirit in the way that most appealed to it. The dogmatism of priestcraft had allowed no such freedom to the Hindu; the gross ideas of an

ancient distribution of society were allowed to mingle with religious conceptions, and the accident of birth to debar a man from offering to the Deity what was, by the confession of the priests themselves, a higher and holier form of worship. And yet what after all was the meaning of these ceremonies? Of what use was Vedokta or Puranokta if no one understood what they were intended to imply? And if the priests themselves understood them, why did they not teach the people, who were thus led to put faith in meaningless repetitions of formulas? He was profoundly contemptuous of mere ritual accepted with blind trust in the wisdom of ancestors:

‘It is he (the priest) predominantly who should teach men the doctrines and practices of religion. This is only possible if he understands them. He must therefore prepare himself by general education and study for his specialized task. But he must remember that what is required is not merely a knowledge of the doctrines and the ceremonies. That may be sufficient for the uneducated but it is quite inadequate for men and women with modern education. These require to know the reasons for the belief and the justification of the practices.’¹

Such ideas as these, and much more relating to marriage and funeral customs and to general conduct, the Maharaja laid before those who were about to enter the priesthood. But the task of effecting any radical reform has been beyond his powers. The ferment of reform is stirring in the Hindu mind, owing chiefly to contact with the West, but except in externals little has been accomplished. The social reformer preaches on the platform and in the Press, but the iron hand of tradition lies too heavy upon the people, and the vested interests of priestcraft combine to allow no relaxation of its tyranny. Partial victories the Maharaja had, as we have seen, but these concerned his own household. So far as in him lay, he has put his theories

¹ *Speeches and Addresses*, vol. ii, p. 436.

into practice. In 1915 he passed the Purohit Act, designed to ensure that the priest should really know and understand the mysteries of which he was the ministrant. Passive resistance of the Brahman priest-class has hitherto made the Act practically a dead letter. No one troubles to pass the prescribed examination, and as weddings must go on the penalties have not been enforced. All that the Maharaja has been able to do is to get the old Sanskrit translated into the vernacular, so that the people may at least have an opportunity of knowing what the marriage service means.

III

But if the task was difficult of curbing the greed of the priesthood, of fighting their vested interests, and of weaning the people from prejudice, superstition, and formula, by showing them a more rational form of religion, even more difficult was it in the face of popular opinion to introduce to the ordinary rights of citizenship those despised classes which Gujerat calls *Antayajas*, and which all India has learned to call 'untouchables'.

The system under which millions of the population are kept apart from their fellows in villages or communities of their own, and regards their touch and almost their presence as pollution, has persisted in India since very ancient times. It is not, as some missionaries seem to think, a system of deliberate cruelty, nor is it in the least comparable, as others have suggested, with the ostracism of Indians in the African colony. For the first presupposes that India is incapable of humanity, and in the second the colonists are expected to bring into operation the watchwords of the French Revolution which are now the watchwords of all Europe, and especially to admit the equality of the King's subjects within the Empire. But the treatment of the pariahs in India has its roots deep

down in the religious prejudices of a conservative people. It is part of a social system evolved beyond the memory of history to which orthodox Hindus cling as though it were a thing of yesterday. The injustice of it has been many times admitted by Hindus themselves, who would have abolished the ordinary forms of slavery long ago, but because of the prejudice of the masses and because of the Levitical sanction which is attached to it, no one has yet been found of sufficient influence to procure its abandonment.

The origin of the custom will never be certainly known. The 'Aryan' School, who obtain their information from Sanskrit sources, imagine that the caste system was introduced to preserve the purity of the stock, that the conquered peoples of India were relegated to the lowest recognized division, that of the Sudras, who are the cultivators of the soil, and that the pariahs were the aborigines, or perhaps those who did not submit to the Aryan conquerors. There are many objections to this theory, which it is out of place to discuss here. Not the least, however, is that while any Sudra can aspire to any position in the State, the lot of the pariahs, except for the efforts of missionaries and the intervention of the British Government, has remained almost unchanged. The theory of degraded occupation has even less to recommend it, because, though some pariahs are employed as scavengers, and many more are engaged in leather and allied trades which are an abomination to the orthodox Hindu, many more are field-labourers, and as such carry on work which is as honourable and as much respected as any in the country. The present writer is convinced that the system was begun in some form of religious taboo connected with totemistic rites. The whole system of caste, including the degradation of the pariahs, is strongest, as every one admits, in the south. It is now generally conceded

that when the Aryans came into India they found a precedent civilization, that of the Dravidians, which may have been superior, but at any rate was not far inferior, to their own. These Dravidians had themselves conquered the aborigines, whom they had reduced to a virtual, if not an actual slavery, and refused to admit them into that form of totem worship, always closely allied with pollution, which they themselves practised. Caste in this view did not begin with the Aryans but with the Dravidians, and was adapted by the former to their own purposes. The Dravidians, however, allowed the pariahs to beat drums at the temples and on other occasions when it was desirable to ward off evil spirits. These folk were gradually absorbed into the general population, but the original taboo remained. Outcast then, they are still outcast.

This theory, for it is like other theories only conjecture, receives some support from internal evidence. It is well known to Sanskrit scholars that the only reference to caste contained in the *Rig Veda* occurs in Book X, which is a late collection of the Vedic hymns. No mention is, of course, made of outcasts, but the pariah is so inseparably bound up with the caste system that he may be considered part of it. Again the word Parayan means in Tamil (which is a Dravidian language) a 'drum beater', and it is an indisputable fact that the pariahs still make night hideous in southern India with their monotonous and intolerable tomtoms, which are the invariable accompaniments of Hindu weddings there. Moreover, in dealing with the ancient customs, it is always safe to assume a religious significance, until it is disproved by examination, and the idea of ceremonial pollution is too common to be easily discarded. It is true that the pariah is not so rigorously treated in other parts of India; but caste itself is there less rigid, and this is probably due to the many

waves of invasion, bringing different conceptions of civilization with them, which flowed over the north but left the south almost untouched.¹

If this theory be in the main accepted, it follows that the condition of the pariahs to-day is the survival of a long obsolete and barbaric custom which dates from a period, perhaps, about the time of Abraham or even earlier. It is hardly creditable to a cultured people that they should thus have preserved a custom which would do no honour to an Australian savage, but it is only fair to say that this aspect of the case has probably never been put before them. For generations untold the tradition has been handed down from father to son, and so strong has been the caste feeling, so disastrous the penalties for breaking it, that very few have dared to undertake so perilous an adventure as the touching of the untouchable, and the admission of him into society. No effort will ever avail to remove this blot upon the fair face of India until she recognizes with practical unanimity, or at least with the overwhelming strength of public opinion, that the open sore of the pariah is what it is—a relic of barbarism.

From his very early years the Maharaja set to work to ameliorate the lot of these poor folk. Schools were established, for which, however, he could get no Hindu teachers—‘only Muslims and Aryas came forward’. Antyaj boarding schools were set up, and ‘the written testimony of many visitors to them . . . goes to show that three or four years of refined surroundings and education so transform the boys and girls in appearance that they are not to be distinguished from children of higher caste’. Nor was he afraid to practise himself what he enjoined others to do. It has already been mentioned that when he is on

¹ For further particulars see *Asiatic Review*, September 1928, January and April 1929.

tour the poor people crowd round his car without let or hindrance, and he feels neither repulsion nor shame at their doing what others in the country could not or would not do. He has lashed his people with his tongue over this great obstacle to progress, and he has so far succeeded that these outcast boys are admitted to schools, though they sit apart in them, and that Antyaj representatives are to be found upon the Municipal Councils, and even in the Legislative Assembly of the State. What that means in a country where the pariah has hitherto been barred, save sometimes under the cloak of a Christianity which, as likely as not, is due not to inward conviction but to a desire to rise in the social scale, those who know India and her ways can best realize.

So evident was his interest in the question that the Maharaja was chosen to be the President of the All India Conference on 'Untouchability', which was held in Bombay on the 23rd March 1918. The conscience of India had been awakened, though little has come of all the noble sentiments which have flowed freely enough from the platform. But the Maharaja was a sincere believer and he spoke with the authority of conviction, as well as of the knowledge that he himself had honestly done his best to translate sentiment into action. He reminded his hearers of what had been done in Japan, where, after the Great Renunciation of the Daimios and the Samurai, which passed into history, the Emperor emancipated the pariahs of Japan by an edict comparable to the proclamation of Lincoln or the ukase of the Czar Alexander. The reference to Japan, doubtless the outcome of his Japanese visit, was specially telling, because all India after the defeat of a 'Western' Power by an 'Eastern' in 1906 had been hugging the notion that what Japan could do she could do. The Maharaja pleaded for social reform on the plain matter-of-fact ground that 'this social policy is in a large

measure responsible for that abounding energy and zeal which enabled Japan, in two generations, to rise from obscurity to so large a measure of economic and political importance in the family of nations'.¹ But he also appealed on higher grounds:

'The first is the utter inhumanity of the institution. The spirit of civilized peoples rose so strongly against slavery during the nineteenth century that it was practically abolished throughout the world. And yet the state of untouchability, which in some of its aspects is worse than slavery, is permitted to survive without effective protest on the part of a majority of our people. Wherever slavery has existed there has been a certain amount of contact between master and slave. In Greece and Rome we know that trade was despised and industrial and commercial enterprises were given over to helots. The Romans used their slaves not only as personal servants but as agents, managers, bailiffs, book-keepers, etc., so that the slaves had opportunity of rising to relatively high functions. But the Indian caste peoples have doomed the untouchables to a condition of servility and humiliation which is even more subtly cruel than the physical tortures practised by the slave-hunters in Africa, and the poignancy of which will increase with education.

'Their dwellings shall be outside the village and their wealth shall be dogs and donkeys. Their dress shall be the garments of the dead, they shall eat their food from broken dishes. Their transactions shall be among themselves and their marriages with their equals. At night they shall not walk about in villages or towns.

'Such are some of the rules prescribed in the Laws of Manu. When the law of the land sanctions so harsh an ostracism and that in perpetuity, we are not surprised to find in practice that outcastes have been bought and sold as chattels and universally they are treated with less consideration than cattle.'²

This rather lengthy quotation best does justice to the

¹ *Speeches and Addresses*, vol. ii, p. 451.

² *Ibid.*, p. 455.

Maharaja's opinions, and to his firm conviction on the pariah question. Reference has been made more than once in the course of this work to the gallant and successful fight which he made against the more obnoxious features of caste, but if he could have had his way he would have gone much further than this. Caste, like Carthage, was to him a thing to be blotted out. The evils of it covered the whole range of social life. By its petty rules it hampered the life of the individual; it interrupted the easy flow of family life. It interfered with economic development, and crippled professional life by exciting distrust, treachery, and jealousy, and ruined social life by its exclusiveness. It deadened the sense of civic responsibility by making communal come before public interests. But its worst offence was its effect on the national life and character :

'It intensifies local dissensions and diverse interests and obscures great national ideals and interests which should be those of every caste and people and renders the country disunited and incapable of overcoming its defects or of availing itself of the advantages which it should gain from contact with the civilization of the West. It robs us of our humanity by insisting on the degradation of some of our fellowmen who are separated from us by no more than the accident of birth. It prevents the noble and charitable impulses which have done so much for the improvement and mutual benefit of European society.'¹

It was credited with doing other things also, but perhaps to the Maharaja's mind the crowning offence was that it was 'the steady enemy to all reform'.² It was certainly something to remove, or to have removed, the external trappings of caste which so greatly hindered the social life, but the Maharaja summed up his deeper feelings in a single sentence :

¹ Ibid., vol. i, p. 159.

² Ibid., p. 160.

‘To remove the externals of caste will do us no good if it does not help the exorcism of this spirit from our hearts.’¹

That was more than any Maharaja or any confederation of Princes could accomplish. The caste system is firmly established and pervades all India. To substitute a hierarchy of classes for the autocracy of caste requires the unanimous effort of some two hundred million people, the greater number of whom regard both it and its corollary of the outcast as a God-given ordinance. Baroda has done something, under the guidance of her Maharaja, to do away with a part of the more irritating features of the system and to make life more pleasant both for the high born and the humble, but relatively to the vastness of the issues involved it does not amount to much. The spirit is there and refuses to be exorcized.

IV

The position of women in the structure of Indian society has been the theme of many writers and of much controversy. What is popularly, though erroneously, called ‘Sati’,² that is, the self-immolation of women upon the funeral pyres of their husbands, the marriage of mere children, the degradation of the widow, the relegation of the woman to the position of a household drudge, and the animal producer of progeny, particularly sons, the purdah system, and the denial of education to all women—all these have been sufficiently canvassed, sometimes without knowledge, sometimes without sympathy, and sometimes with the prejudice of preconceived ideas, but on the whole with insight and a profound desire to improve the status of women, and with it the general condition of the country. Some of these customs are dead

¹ *Speeches and Addresses*, vol. i, p. 163.

² ‘Sati’ is not the thing performed but the woman who performs it.

or dying. Some are very gradually yielding to the pressure of educated opinion, but in others the hold which tradition has, especially upon the masses, is too strong for the attacking forces.

It cannot be too often repeated that the fourth item of this catalogue of female disabilities, the relegation of the woman to the position of a household drudge, has no real foundation in fact. The misconception seems to have arisen from *a priori* ideas of those who had no access to Indian houses. The woman was quite evidently uneducated, she could not even read and write; she did not appear with her men folk but stayed in the house, cooking her food, cleaning the place, minding or bearing the children. What else could she be but a household drudge? But this judgement ignored the very real and dominating influence of the woman in all the minor affairs of life, which an American has irreverently called 'one d—d thing after another'. If the child is sick, it is the woman who decides whether the doctor shall be called, and if so, who. If the husband and wife differ about the choice of a bride for the boy, it is the wife who is victorious. In many other ways, in those little matters which occur from day to day and from hour to hour, the women of India, like the women of other countries, are supreme.

This state of things, however, only shifts the social burden of responsibility. If upon the old erroneous theory that woman is a chattel and the slave of her husband, the burden lay upon society to educate her and to give her the chances that the more fortunate male enjoyed, all the more was such education necessary when it was recognized that upon her depended the upbringing of the race, and that to her conservative teaching the survival of many of the outworn customs and superstitions could be traced. It was largely due to the attitude of the women themselves that widow-burning lingered on after

it had been officially abolished; it was often the women who clung to the purdah system which their more advanced husbands would have liked to see decay and die. The physical well-being of the race was entrusted to those who lived in unhygienic surroundings, whose nurture of their children violated every scientific principle of health, and who sacrificed with unintentional pathos the lives of little ones to a superstition or a tradition. The lives of the women tended to become a thing apart; they could not enter into the larger interests of their husbands; they might not be expected to share his work but they were also shut out from his wider intellectual activities, so that not only were they themselves deprived of half the savour of life, but for want of the stimulus of an equal domestic life the husband's own mental horizon tended to become circumscribed, and his eyes to be too entirely fixed upon his work and the small local interests about him.

There are plenty of happy marriages in India. It will always be an open question whether the system by which a man's bride is chosen for him, or that by which he chooses for himself, leads to the better results. The wife is in many a household the honoured mistress of her home, and the mother may be paid almost divine honours by her son. 'We believe in India', says Mr. Dhan Mukerjee, 'that woman is man's spiritual superior, though physically man is her protector. In matters of religion woman is supreme.'¹ The ideal of all women is Sita, who is universally regarded as the personification of modesty, of chastity, and of wifely devotion, and the freedom which women enjoy in Europe—a freedom which has provoked criticism from more than one quarter—seemed to the orthodox to be the very negation of their ideal. And the preservation of the ideal was

¹ *Caste and Outcast*, p. 151.

paramount. It was not worth while to run the risk of destroying that by the introduction of new-fangled notions of woman's place in society imported from the West.

The Maharaja brushed all this aside. The position of woman in India seemed to him a 'bad economy of social forces'. Woman could not be regarded as a thing apart; without her society became lop-sided, a monster with one side developed and the other atrophied. And society was all important. Upon the social system and all that it stood for, depended ultimately the progress and the prosperity of the nation :

'By the denial of education to women we deprive ourselves of half the potential force of the nation, deny to our children the advantage of having cultured mothers, and by stunting the faculties of the mother affect injuriously the heredity of the race. We create moreover a gulf of mental division in the home and put a powerful drag on progress by making the women a great conservative force that clings to everything old, however outworn or irrational.'¹

Education has been the Maharaja's special hobby all his working life. He had 'no hesitation in saying that we cannot do better than educate all our subjects. This is absolutely necessary for the realization of my ambitions and wishes for the future of my people.' And he has given special attention to female education, to fit the girls for their function in the social life of the people. But words mean nothing, and he would have thought very ill of himself if, having the power, he had not translated his words into deeds. One of the very early acts of his reign was to establish a Training College for Women Teachers, which was founded in 1881, some four years before there was a similar College for men. The cause of female education had been taken up by T. Madhav Rao who, however, had made a very modest beginning. In 1875

¹ *Speeches and Addresses*, vol. i, p. 164.

there were only two schools, at Baroda and Petlad; by 1880 the number had increased to eight with a total attendance of 504. In 1927-8 there was one High School for Girls with a roll of 438, and the number of girls in Primary Schools was approaching 70,000.

These are remarkable figures, though, naturally, they do not compare well with the corresponding ones for boys. The results are not wholly due to the Maharaja's special interest in female education; the establishment of Compulsory Education, to which allusion has been made elsewhere, is largely responsible for the great apparent increase in girls attending Primary Schools, and the general change in the attitude of public opinion all over India would have been bound to have its reactions upon Baroda State. But Compulsory Education is itself a special feature of the reign, and the Maharaja took up the cause of the women long before public opinion had made itself felt.

There were, and still are, many obstacles to be overcome. The enormous disparity in numbers between the education of boys and of girls in the Secondary Schools and the College is an index of the public estimation of the need for female education. In the branch of English education, which apart from its name always implies a higher standard since, whatever may be the virtues of the language, no boy or girl is fully educated without it, there were in 1928-9, in the Government schools and Colleges, nearly 16,000 boys and 513 girls: in the College the respective figures were 685 and 11. Popular prejudice, whether it be due to the arguments already used, or merely to the inertia of an outworn tradition, or again to the feeling that women can make no use of education, has not yet been overcome. The small band of highly educated women, headed by the Maharani, who has equalled, if she has not excelled, her husband as a champion of women, are an

adornment to Baroda society; their experience has not justified any fear of a departure from the Sita ideal, and one can only regret that more parents have not profited by their example.

It is perhaps not altogether apathy. The boys must anyhow be educated, and in the fierce battle of competition an imperfect education wins but very small prizes. The sacrifices which an Indian parent will make for education are very great indeed, and strain the family purse to the utmost. Social custom still demands that quite disproportionate sums shall be spent on weddings, on funerals, and on other religious or quasi-religious objects, and the education of the girls becomes simply a financial question. Indian custom does not allow married women to work, and if there be a few exceptions they only prove the rule. There is a definite return to be expected from the boy, which can be expressed in terms of money; the girl holds out no such hopes, and the public, not seeing things with the vision of the Maharaja, is content so long as the marriage market is open.

This taboo on the working woman has been a further obstacle in that it is very difficult to find women teachers. In spite of the facilities which the State has given, the numbers under training were less than half of those in the sister institution for men. Here again progress is retarded by social custom. In Hindu society a spinster is rarely, if ever, to be found, and since conjugal life begins at a very early age (though not so early as some have imagined) the cares of the wife immediately prevent any other occupation. The consequence is that the career of a school-mistress is practically open only to a few—to widows, to those who are not bound by these customs, and to a select circle whose inclination or ambition has led them to break loose from tradition.

V

The progress of female education may in time lead to a change of attitude in regard to widows. The causes which led to the general prohibition of widow re-marriage are obscure. They seem somehow to be connected with that idea of chastity of which Sita is the embodiment. While she was a prisoner in the house of Ravana in Larka she had great difficulty, as one may easily suppose, in resisting the advances of her captor, for whose gratification she had been stolen from her husband Rama. That she did so was counted little short of a miracle, and the repudiation of her by Rama, after her rescue and return to India, upon the ground that it was impossible for her to have remained chaste, is one of the most pathetic of the episodes in that stirring epic, the Ramayana. Her purity was vindicated by Mother Earth, who received Sita, 'the furrow', into the bosom from which she had originally issued. Some metaphysical connexion may also be mixed up with the prohibition, as it seems to have been, in the case of widow-burning. The male was all important, the female existed only because of him. It was an extension, almost a perversion, of the Miltonic idea:

He for God only : she for God in him,

for Milton never went so far as to suggest that with the life of the man, the spirit-life of the woman was ended, and that therefore the shell of the body only imprisoned the spirit which ought to be released to join its male counterpart. The conception of marriage as an inviolable sacrament seems to suggest that the more physical union is comparatively unimportant; it is the union of soul to soul that really matters, and as the soul is indestructible, the marriage is indissoluble. It lasts for all eternity. This theory—for it is nothing but a theory—would account for the extension of the taboo even to virgin widows,

whose boy husbands have died before the consummation of marriage was physically possible, for the public performance of the ritual of betrothal had already endowed the union with its sacred character, and the conception of a spiritual union in which no question of physical capacity could arise, would make the betrothal as binding as the consummated marriage. The prohibition did not extend to the man. He was the Sun from whom the Moon-wife drew her reflected light. He was the God to whom she owed the worship of her body and her soul. Without him she could have no spiritual existence, and the very physical structure of his body seemed to contemplate the possession of more than one wife. He could exist independently of her but not she of him. As for chastity, the man has seldom been placed upon the same plane as the woman, and even in Europe what is venial in the man is in the woman regarded by society as an outrage upon itself.

Whatever may be the true explanation of the condition of widows, there is no doubt about the fact. The widow practically ceases to be a unit of society. She is shorn of her ornaments; she becomes a thing of evil omen; she is the drudge of the house to whom a bare maintenance is allowed. This is, of course, to put the case in its least attractive form. There are many sons who would sooner starve themselves than see their mothers starve, and there are many widows who live in comparative comfort; nor to this extent can the laws of Europe cast a stone at Hindu custom since the Hindu widow is guaranteed at least a maintenance, while the European widow may be left in destitution. It is, however, notorious in the main that the lot of the Hindu widow is a hard one. The Maharaja put the case on somewhat different lines :

“The existence side by side of customs like polygamy and the prohibition of widow re-marriage similarly shows a bad

organization of society. The one keeps up an unduly low standard of morality among men, the other demands an impossibly high standard from women. To enforce this standard we suppress our feelings of humanity and affection, and inflict severities upon widows in order to keep their vitality low and make them less attractive, yet the impossibility remains and the laws of Nature we have ignored avenge themselves; for in spite of our harsh measures we fail to preserve even an ordinary standard of morality in this much ill-treated class.' ¹

He went on to point out that such theories as these came from 'the lowering of our ideas about women and the relations of the sexes'.² The early records, and especially the Epics, show no such severities to women. The noble portrait of Damayanti when at her Swayamvaram she was wooed by the gods in person, the devotion of Sita to Rama when she followed him in his long wanderings, the final journey of Draupadi to the heaven of Indra in company with her five husbands, though she was the first to fall by the way, and the gate of heaven was only reached by Yudishthira and his dog—these and many other instances were evidence that woman was then held in higher estimation, had greater freedom, and were helpmeets as well as devoted wives.

There was a change in the Buddhist period, but even then 'women are still educated and on the whole respected'.² It was not till later that degeneration really began:

'A change came when the disturbed times of ignorance and foreign invasion were disintegrating society. The ideal of wifely devotion and purity was exaggerated beyond all reason—and all customs were modified in this spirit. Sati, the entire prohibition of widow re-marriage, early marriage, and the rest were established in our society, and in some parts of India the strictest Muslim type of *purdah* was adopted. Ignorance, increasing among men, became absolute among women.'²

¹ *Speeches and Addresses*, vol. i, p. 164.

² *Ibid.*, p. 165.

VI

The same considerations as apply to widow re-marriage seem to be bound up in vague fashion with the custom of child-marriage. If the Maharaja is right in his contention that it was established at the period of the decadence of learning and of foreign invasion, there may have been an added fear that young girls would be easily violated, and hope that such a calamity might be averted by giving them a natural protection. There was at any rate no such custom in the time of the Epics, which in the descriptions of betrothals seem to have some affinities with the Greek. Far from submitting to the choice of her parents as a young girl not yet endowed with a will of her own, she appears in full conclave of her suitors to choose her bridegroom. Thus it was that Damayanti, passing by the gods, asked pardon of them for preferring Nala, since him she would marry and none other. Thus it was that Sita was won in open tourney, by the feat of Rama, who not only bent but broke the great bow of Siva that had baffled all others—and thus too in a like tourney Arjuna won Draupadi by his transcendent skill in archery. These are not the feats of immature boys, and the infant girl is no bride for the fully developed hero.

The awful effects of child-marriage have been painted in very lurid colours by Miss Katherine Mayo, who wrote with the omniscience of a short tour in India and an intensive study in selected quarters. Long before she thus committed herself, the Maharaja had uttered a word of warning. He admitted that these were evils, grave evils, in the Hindu social system, but 'we cannot say that our whole society is evil', and there were merits even if the defects were startlingly obtrusive. But he added:

'It is also sometimes unwise to take European criticism too seriously, for Europeans do not always see correctly or make

allowances for diversity of institutions and customs. Thus they often speak as if our marriage ceremony implied immediate consummation as theirs does.' ¹

That is a perfectly just criticism. Many writers have committed themselves to views about India which betray an astonishing superficiality. It would be very unwise even after a long residence in India to venture on statements dogmatically expressed, unless they have been tested by searching inquiries and by cross-checks. In such a matter as child-marriage the views of a European writer are very apt to be coloured by his own predilections, and it is safer to fall back upon the opinions of a Hindu gentleman—who wrote the official *Gazetteer* of Baroda in collaboration with an Englishman:

'The most prominent cause of the great mortality amongst women, especially among the Hindus, is the practice of infant marriage. Though cohabitation does not, as a rule, take place immediately after marriage, it does take place as soon as physical circumstances permit, and a large proportion of early marriages means a correspondingly high percentage of early consummations and of early births from immature mothers. This circumstance might naturally be expected to exercise a very prejudicial effect upon the longevity and vitality of the female sex and even to be the cause of a considerable number of deaths among them, and statistics go to show that this in fact is actually so, especially during the ages of 15-20.' ²

The statement is here given for what it is worth. It is obvious that it is open to critical examination. Nothing deceives like statistics; yet in view of the fact that statistics have been called in aid, it is perhaps worth a passing remark that in 1926-7 there were to every 100 female 109 male deaths. If infant marriage is 'the most prominent cause of female mortality', the abolition would make the disparity even greater; in other words, male mortality

¹ *Speeches and Addresses*, vol. i, p. 156.

² *Baroda Gazetteer*, vol. i, p. 106.

would be on a low computation about 100 to 130, and that in spite of the fact that the man leads on the whole a healthier, because more open-air, life than the woman. Let us leave it there.

Apart, however, from statistics and from dogmatic assertion of fact, it is now the generally received opinion, even amongst educated Hindus, that early marriages are wrong, and ought to be discouraged. The Widow Re-marriage Act was passed in 1901 following upon the Indian Act; and in 1904 another Act known as the 'Infant Marriage Prevention Act' also became law. Very little advantage has been taken of the former, but the latter was reported after twenty years of working to have had a 'high educative value, and that under its influence impetus had been given to a movement of reform which among the higher and better-educated classes had appreciably raised the age limit for marriage, and which in its turn had influenced, though to a smaller extent, the other classes as well'.¹ The Act had of course to encounter a great deal of opposition at first, and indeed the advance has been slow. But one does not expect to work miracles, and it is at least something to the good that the attitude of the people is slowly changing, and being changed, both by example and precept.²

The most recent attempt at reform in this sphere is the Divorce Act. Divorce, properly so called, is unknown to Hindu law, which regards marriage with all the rigour

¹ *Baroda State Administration Report*, 1926-7, p. 38.

² How strong is orthodox opinion was recently exemplified during the passing of the Sarda Act—see note p. 49. The Bill was denounced as an attack upon religion and hundreds of thousands of infant marriages were performed before the date when it became law. There is in Gujerat one community which goes so far as to marry unborn children, the contract of course being void if the babies are of the same sex.

During the recent unrest some inflammatory capital was made out of the Act, especially upon the Frontier, but it is only fair to add that it received support from advanced and honest opinion.

of the Roman Catholic Church. It was certain that there would be opposition from the more conservative or old-fashioned school, but it is a surprising sign of the times and a testimony to the Maharaja's influence that on the whole educated opinion is favourable. The world, it argues in the modern strain of Western Europe, is what we find it; marriage may be a God-given ordinance, but it is an ordinance which was meant to be applied to the happiness of man and to the orderly devolution of property. It is contrary to the Divine law that a man and a woman who cannot live happily together, or who have sinned one against the other, should be bound by the unbreakable fetters of matrimony to endure life-long misery. Such arguments as these are now trite in Europe, but there is an element of novelty about them in Baroda State. It shocks the orthodox to think that encroachments are to be made upon the sacred citadel of the divinity of marriage, just as it shocked the Protestant Clergy of England that a man should be allowed to marry his deceased wife's sister, and the only argument that can be put forward in either case is the plea of sentiment. The Bill is, however, not yet law, and for some time to come it will probably be but a piece of academic legislation. Society, if it chooses, has many ways of revenging itself.

VII

In these ways the Maharaja has endeavoured to bring his people into line with modern thought, and the ultimate goal throughout has been the progress of the State and the onward march of the people. It has been shown elsewhere how he has set his face against caste and the purdah system, for the chief reason that in his judgement they are clogs upon the wheel of progress. He views society as a whole. One caste to him is as good as another, for each caste has its allotted work to do in the economy of

the State. Not the Ruler alone, nor his officers, not only the lawyers and the priests and the merchants, but the artists and musicians and writers have their own place in the culture, and the scavengers and sweepers in the material welfare of the community. It is in this spirit of the dignity of service, as well as in the spirit of humanity, that he has laboured in the cause of the lowest and humblest of the people; and it is in the same spirit of equality of opportunity, tending towards the social progress of the State, that he has been the champion of women and has tried to remove their disabilities. He is none the less Hindu in thought and feeling; he has travelled too much in Europe and America not to have realized the weakness of Western Civilization, or not to have seen that some of our boasted progress is no progress at all, or at best only progress in a circle. What he has tried to do is to adapt his European experience to his own country, and to place the Indian social system upon a more rational basis. The victory is not yet and may be slow in coming, but at least the Maharaja has blazed the trail.

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Chapter Nineteen

THE GOLDEN JUBILEE

ON the 27th May 1925, Maharaja Sayaji Rao completed fifty years of rule. At the date of his accession Baroda was in chaos; in 1925 she was one of a few States held up as models for others to copy. In 1875 her finances were in utter disorder; large sums of money were found in the women's apartments; the roads were unsafe; the nobles were unruly. The cultivators upon whom rested the prosperity of the State steered a precarious course between the Scylla of uncertainty of tenure, and the Charybdis of exaction and oppression. There was hardly anything that could properly be called a road, and railways as the outcome of State enterprise did not exist. The capital was perhaps up to the standard of Indian towns in those days, but the public buildings were inadequate, the streets narrow, and there was no assured supply of water.

All this was changed by Sayaji Rao. The finances were placed upon a solid basis; method was introduced into work and administration; the cultivators were encouraged by a regular settlement of the land tax. Roads were built, and a great impetus was especially given to railways. The capital in particular received much. The water-supply was one of the earliest and greatest gifts of the Maharaja; the roads were widened, as the noble thoroughfares attest. Education was not only fostered, but was for the first time adequately housed. The administration of justice was purified and systematized, and Baroda was one of the first States to establish a High Court on the British pattern. Medicine received adequate recognition in the establishment of a hospital which takes high rank in India.

Not all of this can be credited to Maharaja Sayaji Rao. The foundations were well and truly laid during his

minority, but the erection of the noble structure which rests upon them is predominantly his work. Nor was he content with improving upon what had gone before. New buildings sprang up, new departments were created, new institutions founded. Compulsory education had been introduced, and the executive powers separated from the judicial. More than all, a resolute attack had been made upon the less desirable features of the caste system, with the result that men lived together in greater harmony and freer intercourse; women were offered, and to some extent accepted, a more liberal position in society; and a measure of justice was done in holding out a helping hand to the depressed classes.

All this and more had been the work of fifty years, and the Maharaja could look back with pride upon his achievement. There had been failures. The irrigation schemes which he had launched had generally justified Sir T. Madhav Rao's foreboding that they would not pay. Compulsory education had not brought that overwhelming success which the eye of enthusiasm had foreseen. Vigorous efforts to stimulate commerce had only partial and sporadic results. Opposition too there had been, which had to be lived down, placated, or overcome. But it is not in man to command success in all things and at all times, and the credit side of the Maharaja's work far exceeds the debit. When the stupendous task with which he was faced is considered, the wonder is not that he sometimes failed, but that he ever succeeded. He had deserved well of his subjects; and by their generous response to his efforts they had deserved well of him. And so on this 27th May 1925 people and Ruler, who had so frequently declared that the interests of both were identical, were found to be on terms of genuine esteem and mutual affection. The day itself passed prosaically. The Maharaja was in Paris packing up, for on the 28th he left Paris

for London. He would doubtless have wished to be with his people at such a time, but even if it had been otherwise possible, the time of the year when the fierce heat of Baroda is at its fiercest, would have forbidden that. It was as well for all concerned that the rejoicings were postponed to a more agreeable season. The opportunity was taken between the landing in Bombay and the opening of the festivities, of a short visit to the Kadi District chiefly in connexion with the water-supply. The Maharaja was greeted with the fervent acclamations which he receives throughout his dominions. This is not a figure of speech. The superficial Englishman who has heard somewhat vaguely that to the Hindu a Maharaja is an avatar of divinity, may be inclined, therefore, to suppose that the salutations of the people are really the adoration of a god. The Indian is a past master in the art of discrimination, and no one who has heard the hearty shouts of 'Maharaj-ki-jai' from a full-throated crowd could possibly mistake them for anything but what they are, the expression of genuine attachment.

II

The actual celebrations began on the 11th January with a great public Durbar on the Varashia grounds to the north of the city. The Maharaja rode in State in a golden ambari on his own special elephant, which was specially adorned for the occasion. He was escorted by infantry and cavalry which are in equipment and drill essentially on the Western pattern, and by the gold and silver guns drawn by white oxen, which are not. The procession might—somewhat fantastically perhaps—be said to typify the East and West in the gap between which the Maharaja claimed to stand. Gold and silver were the order of the day. The Maharaja and Maharani sat on the gadi on a raised dais, and round about them were grouped on gold and silver chairs the members of the family.

Addresses were then presented, and according to the nationality or fancy of the various communities no less than six languages were requisitioned—Gujerati, Marathi, English, Hindustani, Arabic, and Persian. And amongst these various august bodies appeared the Antyajas, the humble community of those who are in cant phrase called ‘untouchable’, whose cause the Maharaja had so consistently pleaded, and for whom he had done so much. Nothing surely on that memorable day can have pleased him better than the gratitude of these poor outcasts.

The Maharaja replied comprehensively in English. He claimed, modestly enough, that in all that he had done in the course of the previous fifty years, his sole motive was the good of his people. But reforms imposed from without could accomplish very little unless the people themselves rose to the height of their opportunities. ‘More than the reforms, what the people require is a good physique,’ and that could never be attained so long as they clung to outworn and evil customs and prejudices. He exhorted them to think for themselves, not to be content with accepting without question or analysis anything that is told them. They were their own enemies. India was not a land of serfs, except in so far as Indians chose to make it so by hugging the fetters of their own ignorance and prejudice. And then, broadening out the issues into the larger conception of Indian nationhood, he urged them to look forward and not back, to live for the future and not in the past, to cut away all that was hindering social progress, and to accept all that was good in foreign culture:

‘March boldly along’, he concluded, ‘with unflinching courage, dropping all that is rusted and out of date, utilize all your opportunities for the good of your humanity and your own progress and welfare will be assured.’¹

¹ *Baroda State Administration Report*, 1925-6, p. 280.

The assemblage then dispersed amid the firing of salutes, and the playing of the Baroda anthem.

The remaining celebrations followed the usual course on such occasions. There was a second Durbar in the Palace, and a children's gathering in the Courts of Justice (Nyaya Mandir), which is a pleasing feature of most Baroda festivities. There was a grand review of the State Army, and, according to Hindu (and in these later days European) customs, a distribution of food and clothing to thousands of the poor. There was a garden-party to the leading men of Baroda and the European community, and the customary fireworks and illuminations.

But the people waited for something more than mere display. Nor were they disappointed. The Maharaja announced the remission of land-revenue arrears amounting to 3 lakhs, and a suspension of the cotton duties. He promised to establish telephonic communication between the larger towns of Baroda, and ordered the release of certain convicts from the jail and of the boys at the reformatory school.

III

But there were still two ceremonies to perform which would serve as more lasting memorials of the occasion than the ephemeral splendours of the festivities. It had for some time past been the desire of His Highness to establish in Baroda some memorial to the distinguished dead, and the desire had either originated from, or had been quickened by a sight of the Pantheon in Paris, and of Westminster Abbey. The Golden Jubilee of his reign was a fitting time to mark at least the beginning of the fulfilment of that desire, and on the 15th January he laid the foundation-stone of the Kirti Mandir or Temple of Fame. He told his audience that his aim was 'to keep ever

fresh the remembrance of the distinguished persons and benefactors of our State'. He reminded them that while 'some names must already be impressed upon the minds of those who take a living interest in our history', there were others whose memory has faded, and others again 'whose names are forgotten for ever'. He gave them his own ideas of greatness :

'Greatness is fundamentally of character. Sincerity and unselfishness, far-seeing wisdom and untiring energy are its never-failing qualities. With these the great man stands unbroken and undaunted in face of physical misfortunes. To him health and wealth are twin opportunities for unceasing service. To him sickness and poverty are twin occasions for invincible courage.' ¹

The audience must have been singularly unresponsive if some of them did not thrill at the words of the great funeral oration over the mighty dead which the Maharaja used as his peroration :

'Let us now praise famous men
And our fathers that begat us;
The Lord hath wrought great glory by them
Through his great power from the beginning. . . .
All these were honoured in their generations
And were the glory of their times. . . .
And some there be which have no memorial,
Who are perished as though they had never been.
But these were merciful men
Whose righteousness hath not been forgotten. . . .
Their bodies are buried in peace,
But their name liveth for evermore.' ¹

In declaring the stone well and truly laid, he threw out a hint that he would found a Golden Jubilee Memorial lecture upon some great personality, whereby annual gatherings might be held in honour of the illustrious

¹ *Speeches and Addresses*, vol. ii, p. 500.

dead, and their example might be held up as a stimulus to the living. That suggestion he has since carried out. Some two months later he performed—still in connexion with the Golden Jubilee—another ceremony of a very different character, which appealed to a sense of practical sympathy, as the other had to sentiments of reverence. The virtue of charity touches a responsive chord in every Hindu heart, though on this occasion the expression of it was more in accord with Western ideas. On the 10th March he declared open a home for the aged poor. The occasion was evidently well suited to what might almost be called an enunciation of policy. Many creeds were represented in his audience, and passages in the Hindu scriptures and epics, in the Koran, in the Zend Avesta, and in the Buddhist Jataka were cited in support of the contention that the exercise of a wise and humane charity was inculcated by all religions. Christians were so slightly in evidence that St. Paul's great hymn to charity was not called upon. The Maharaja took the opportunity of defending his action when in bygone years he had reduced the doles to Brahmans and Musalmans, which mistaken piety had imposed as a religious duty upon the Palace. He has no sympathy at all with the able-bodied parasite. Very gently he told the audience that such practices had no relation to the true spirit of charity, and he claimed that both by word and by deed he had shown himself not unmindful of the wants of the lowest and most helpless of his subjects. In 1926 there was nothing revolutionary in the speech, for His Highness has so thoroughly inoculated the people with his own lofty principles, and has so thoroughly quelled the opposition of vested interests, that what might have been once looked upon as a startling innovation was now placidly regarded as a commonplace.

IV

With these two ceremonies the rejoicings proper of the Golden Jubilee ended, though memorials of it began to spring up in various centres in the Raj. To the European observer it seems strange that no general religious thanksgiving marked the occasion. The historian of King Edward has described the service on the steps of St. Paul's as the 'outstanding episode of the Diamond Jubilee demonstration'.¹ But such services of congregational worship do not seem to be in accordance with the genius of the Hindu religion. Nothing is farther from the truth than any idea that in such matters religion plays no part, for it is a trite observation that from his rising up to his lying down the Hindu is guided by the principles of his faith. But just as weddings take place with all religious rites, not in a temple, but in the private house of one of the parties, so on public occasions prayers are offered up and religious ceremonies are performed without public ostentation.

It is one of the paradoxes of the East that an emotional people, stirred to blind and irrational frenzy by inflamed oratory or by some trivial quarrel, seem to be incapable of whole-hearted enjoyment of a holiday. On more than one occasion the Indian chronicler of the Maharaja's tour in Europe has remarked on the spontaneous gaiety of European peoples out to enjoy themselves. One such has recorded his impressions of a particularly wet and depressing Derby day: 'Nearly every one . . . was wet and none saw anything of the race save a passing flash of horse-flesh. Yet there was hardly any one who seemed to feel when the day's outing was over that he had not thoroughly enjoyed himself.' And the same writer reflects in the following year that 'a little gaiety would lighten the burden

¹ *King Edward VII*, by Sir Sidney Lee, vol. i, p. 612.

they have to carry through years. A little more optimism would enable us to take a more rosy view of life, and fit us better to fight the thousand and one difficulties which beset the path of a normal human being. . . . It is a fashion to decry the gaiety of the West.' He endorses the verdict of an American that 'India requires more laughter'. It is perhaps this undemonstrative idiosyncrasy, coupled with *a priori* reflections on Hindu dogmas, which has led to the belief prevalent in the West that the Hindu religion is pessimistic. That, if the present writer may express a personal opinion, is profoundly untrue. It is a matter of self-expression. Where a European crowd is boisterously happy, an Indian crowd is placidly content. Where a European crowd abandons itself to sheer enjoyment, there is lurking in the back of the mind of an Indian crowd that sense of dignity which makes it also indecorous to be undignified. Passion obliterates reason. An Indian crowd, roused to passion, throws decorum to the winds, and will go to lengths seldom reached in Europe, at any rate in the West. But so long as reason keeps her seat, laughter in India seldom goes beyond a smile.

V

Meanwhile the Viceroy, Lord Reading, had come and gone. Viceregal visits, except in one respect, are very much alike, and the hospitality usual on such occasions was offered. The customary ceremonial visits, arena sports which included wrestling, ram, buffalo, and elephant fights, and acrobatic feats, and a garden-party filled the days. When there is any institution ready for the laying of a foundation-stone or for the opening, it is not unusual to invite the Viceroy to take the leading part, and on this occasion Lord Reading laid the foundation-stone of the new Science Institute in the grounds of Baroda College. The object was not unworthy of the occasion. The Maha-

raja had long wished for the extension of Baroda College. The predilection of students for the Arts course, which in British India had led to the overstocking of certain professions to the neglect of others, was also a problem in Baroda; and the encouragement of science appealed specially to the Maharaja as a method both of increasing knowledge and of preparing youths for the practical business of life. So characteristic a scheme fitted well into the programme of the Golden Jubilee.

The exception (alluded to earlier) to the general similarity in Viceregal visits is of course the banquet, which so far as meats are concerned followed the rule of other banquets. But the speeches on such occasions, though largely complimentary, reflect to some extent the relations of the State with the Government of India. The State banquet is often the opportunity for the State to put forward its case in courteous and dignified language, and for the Viceroy to announce a change of policy, or otherwise to foreshadow the attitude of the Central Government. At the time of Lord Reading's visit the sky was clear; the dark clouds of Lord Curzon's time had rolled away, and the War as one of its few blessings had drawn the States closer to the Paramount Power. The speeches were therefore cordial.

The Maharaja claimed for his State with some pride, and equal justice, an honoured place in the Indian Empire, and pleaded for restoration of the full rights of sovereignty which had been surrendered over a century before when the British Government undertook to mediate between his House and his tributaries. For the whole constitution of India was in the melting-pot, and the States hoped that in the new dispensation their ancient rights and privileges would be revived. They too claimed a place in the sun. Lord Reading replied in terms of courteous praise, not only for what the Maharaja had

done in the War, but also for the many and beneficent reforms which he had introduced during the fifty years of his reign. His reply to the Maharaja's plea for recognition of the States in the new constitution-building of India, as well for the special rights of Baroda, was, as usual, guarded. 'Sympathetic and careful consideration' is as much as any Viceroy can promise on such occasions.

Lord Reading left on the 22nd with cordial expressions of goodwill, to which the Maharaja as cordially responded. Shortly afterwards the Maharaja underwent the long torture of a railway journey to the outlying fragment of his dominions in Kathiawar. The seaside place of Adatra is well fitted by nature for a port. A deep-water creek runs in from the sea between the mainland and the island of Beyt, where the temples are. The creation of a harbour with a pier, alongside which ocean-going steamers could be berthed, was no light undertaking for a State like Baroda. But the thing was at last done. The harbour at Port Okha had been brought to completion, and Baroda had definitely entered the lists in maritime activities. It was to inaugurate this momentous achievement that the Maharaja had undertaken the long journey. The ceremonies were simple. On the 14th February 1926 His Highness after a preliminary Durbar, at which he presented robes of honour to those chiefly responsible for the works, cut the cord at the entrance of the pier, which he then inspected, as well as two large ships moored there in honour of the occasion.

By the time the home for the aged poor had been opened the weather had grown uncomfortably warm, and two days later the Maharaja left Baroda for Europe. A visit to picturesque Bruges, and pilgrimages to Canterbury and Vienna varied the usual programme. The most important feature of the tour was, however, the negotiations which His Highness carried on for the purpose of

establishing a regular service of steamers to Port Okha. The conversations were somewhat protracted, as in the nature of the case they were bound to be, but the result was satisfactory. Sir John Ellerman undertook to send steamers as an experiment, which in the stage Port Okha had reached was as much as he could be expected to do. Advantage too was taken of the stay in England to discuss various other facilities which it was evident would be needed for the development of the Port. These discussions did not bear immediate fruit, but they laid the foundations of a policy for the Department of Commerce and Industry in Baroda to follow.

The Maharaja grew homesick. He longed to be back in Baroda, and although the doctors would have preferred another winter in Europe they yielded to his importunity. Nobody denies that he likes Europe. The climate, especially in the winter, suits him; the busy life with its busy relaxations appeal to him; he enjoys the society of eminent men and women; and foreign travel with its opportunities for observing the institutions of the West is congenial to his restless disposition. But his heart is with Baroda. He 'changes his sky, but not his mind'; and his frequently expressed desire to return to India, when his doctors seriously advised a longer stay in Europe, gives the lie to those who would place him in the category of Indian Rulers, if such there be, who rove over Europe in quest of pleasure alone, to the lasting disadvantage of themselves and of their subjects. On the 19th November His Highness landed once again in Bombay and left the same night for Baroda.

Except for short visits within the State and to one or two places outside it, especially to Delhi, where the Maharani was staying for her health, the time spent in India was generally uneventful. In January 1927 Sir Manubhai Mehta retired from the Dewanship. The new Dewan,

Rao Bahadur V. T. Krishnama Chari of the Madras service, took his place on the 18th February 1927.

VI

The exodus to Europe had now become almost an annual event. In spite of his long absences in the years succeeding the War the Maharaja had never been able to overcome his redoubtable enemy the gout; and to the usual anxieties of the State were now added the financial worries just described. He left India on the 9th April accompanied by the Maharani, and after staying about a month in Paris they went on to London, where they took part in many of the social functions of the season. In due course they proceeded to the usual haunts in the vicinity of the lake of Geneva, and while there they received news of an unprecedented disaster to the State.

The new Dewan had not been long in office and had not yet mastered the details of Baroda administration before he was called upon to face a very ugly situation. The enormous importance of the monsoon rains to India has been remarked by many writers; there is always a feeling of tense expectancy in the air as the time for the coming of the rain draws near. In the year 1927, however, nothing had occurred to suggest anxiety; in Baroda as well as in the south and west things were normal, while in the north, though the rain was below the average, the season was yet young; there was plenty of time to make up lost ground. About the 14th July heavy rain fell as usual throughout the State, and the small river Vishwamitri, which runs through Baroda city in a winding course with a deep but very narrow bed, was in flood as it generally is at that time. On the 24th July it began to rain in earnest, and in four days—from the 24th to 28th—the registered fall in Baroda city was 39 inches, while a maximum of 55 inches was reached in an adjoining district. In

that particular district of Vaghodia the total for the season, which was normally 35 inches, was returned at the unprecedented figure of 113. The rivers and streams rose rapidly. The railways were damaged, and traffic was utterly dislocated. But in the afternoon of the 28th July the water, which up to that time had not reached the level of the bridge over the Vishwamitri connecting the city with the railway station, rose with alarming swiftness. Within a few hours a roaring torrent was rushing nine feet deep across the road. Travellers along the road, utterly taken by surprise, were marooned in trees or on the roofs of houses, and it is said that a woman with her baby was thus cut off in a tree outside the railway station for forty-eight hours before help could reach her. All communication with the British Camp and the Residency was cut off, and the Resident himself was imprisoned in the upper story of his house.

Things were little better elsewhere. The Dhadhar, usually a small and insignificant stream, overflowed its banks and smote down whole villages. Large areas of young crops were submerged and drowned beyond hope of recovery; villages were isolated, and in the north-west the artificial drains, which had by long neglect fallen out of repair, proved altogether inadequate to carry off the water, so that it was there that the loss to house-property was most considerable.

The wildest rumours were afloat, and were duly reported to the newspapers as authentic facts. As all communication was cut off people drew upon their imagination, and every man's improbable tale was, in the excitement that prevailed, accepted at its face value. Men said that the Sayaji Sarovar, the great reservoir which supplies Baroda, had burst and overwhelmed the city with the loss of a thousand lives; that two hundred of the Baroda College boys had either been drowned or had died

of starvation; that thousands of cattle had perished, and hundreds of men had been buried under the fallen houses.

All this proved happily to be the grossest exaggeration, but if the truth was not so bad as that, it was nevertheless bad enough. In Baroda City 40 people lost their lives, and over 4,500 houses were either destroyed or damaged. In a small village outside the city containing but 46 inhabitants 32 were drowned, but otherwise the loss of life was not great. The ascertained total loss throughout the affected districts was 107 inclusive of Baroda City. But if the loss of human life was thus fortunately small, the damage to houses, the loss of crops, and the death of live-stock made the plight of the people almost desperate. The number of live-stock of all descriptions thus lost is returned at about 3,000, but luckily there were amongst these comparatively few of the bovine species which is so indispensable to the Indian ryot. It was, however, in the matter of their houses that the people suffered most. No fewer than 93,220 either collapsed or were damaged. Most of these were no doubt of that unsubstantial kind to be met with in all Indian villages, especially among the poorer classes, but though such dwellings are easily rebuilt, the fact made the immediate distress rather more than less acute. The total loss to the people, whose inability to resist a single season of drought is notorious, was estimated at close on 150 lakhs Rs., or about a million sterling, and this did not include the loss to agriculture, not only by the submersion of the standing crops, but by the layer of sand which the onrush of the flood had spread over the fields.

The Maharaja, who had at first only read the newspaper reports, was greatly distressed, and at once telegraphed his sympathy coupled with a handsome donation towards relief, and wise orders, which practically gave the Government a free hand. They rose nobly to the occasion.

Inspired by the Dewan, V. T. Krishnama Chari, who combined energy and enthusiasm with a coolness and a capacity for meeting the crisis which were beyond praise, they soon had the situation in hand. By the prompt distribution of relief, by a liberal offer of loans on the easiest terms and with the simplest procedure, by grant of free materials for house-buildings, and of special loans for the same purpose, by the offer of extraordinary help to the lowest classes, the people were enabled to recover from this vast disaster in a remarkably short time. And—what perhaps in view of the possible consequences to human life was the most important of all—the immediate measures that were taken to clear up the City and the villages had the happy effect of avoiding the further disaster of an epidemic.

One of the most pathetic results of the flood, though economically of minor importance, was the death by drowning of practically the whole collection of wild animals in the Public Park. These unfortunates were trapped in their cages where nobody could reach them, even if they had dared to let loose lions and tigers upon a panic-stricken people. Hardly one escaped.

Heavy as were the actual monetary losses to the Government, they had the consolation of knowing that their own unremitting efforts were enthusiastically and generously seconded by the people. Deeds of heroism were not infrequent, and were in due course suitably rewarded. The purse-strings of charity were loosened, and help arrived in the shape of food and clothing, as well as in bands of volunteers from British districts beyond the Raj. Never in the history of the State had the public so nobly responded to the call of humanity. The State itself organized relief funds, one of which, that for Baroda City, was administered by Prince Dhairyashil Rao, the sole surviving son of the Maharaja, and the other for

the districts by the Dewan. Disastrous as were the material effects of the flood, it had evoked moral qualities in the Government and in the people which were evidence of the great strides made by Baroda since that fateful 27th May 1875, when the boy Maharaja had been lifted on to his throne.

VII

After leaving Switzerland His Highness returned as usual to Paris and London, but he had only been there two or three days before he suddenly resolved to strike out a new line and to make a tour in Scandinavia. He had already seen something of Norway. This time it was to be Sweden and Denmark. The novel experience kept him busy and interested. Not only were there sights to be seen, but the exquisite neatness of the Danes seems to have struck him forcibly, and he would not have been the Maharaja if he had not visited the Government Dairy and watched the processes of the chief Danish industry. Denmark, enjoyable though it was, was only a prelude to Sweden, which the chronicle describes as 'a land of haunting charm'. The beauty of Stockholm is indeed proverbial. The voyage, however, through the Gotha Canal was something of a revelation to the Indian travellers, and the writer grows lyrical in his description of this incomparable water-way, which 'runs like a blue belt across Sweden from the Kattegat to the Baltic' and 'traverses scenes of the purest Northern beauty'. The Maharaja was greatly impressed; but what interested him most was the people of the country, which the delay at the many locks gave him opportunities of observing. On the way back to England halts were made at Hamburg and at Amsterdam, where Her Highness joined the party from Paris.

The Maharaja was in the mood for novelties. During

his ensuing stay in London he had his first experience of fox-hunting and followed the hounds in Leicestershire with the Quorn, the Cottesmore, and the Belvoir. His daughter the Maharani of Cooch Behar was as well known a figure with these packs as she was in general London Society, and it was largely by her persuasion that the Maharaja was induced to make the venture. It reveals both pluck and will-power that a man of 65 should thus take up the sport, even though he could command good horses and was hunting in sympathetic company. He had of course ridden all his life, and he had hunted at Ootacamund, where, however, though the steep hill-sides are rather terrifying to the beginner, there are no jumps to be faced. It is recorded that he acquitted himself well, and that the exercise did him good.

It was about this time that His Highness, ever watchful of Baroda interests, contemplated a new departure by engaging a European of Indian experience as Private Secretary—a quest which ended with the engagement of the present writer. The Maharaja, however, reserves the right of using his servants in any capacity in which he thinks they will be of greatest service to the State; he looks upon the designation as merely a form which gives them some kind of status on the rolls. Accordingly on his return to India he gave me one of the most responsible positions in the State after the Dewan. The incident serves to illustrate two traits in the Maharaja's character. Though he has only once before employed a European in so responsible a capacity, and then only after some years' acquaintance with the work of the State, he has, as we have already seen, never been averse to employing Europeans as heads of departments, and he believes in bringing fresh ideas to bear upon the problems of the State from the angle of a new nationality or a new creed. Parsis and Mohamedans have joined Gujeratis and Marathas on his

Council, and by this means he has sought to neutralize any local jealousies or local partialities which there may be. Secondly, the Maharaja is not afraid of an experiment. He does not of course pick up the first man he meets, but when once he is satisfied that he has found the man he wants he is willing to make the venture. It may be added that he gives you no inkling of what is in his mind. He will ask you questions which seem to be ordinary *causerie* but which have a relevance that you do not suspect. Let it be set down to the reputation of Baroda that my friends congratulated me that the offer had come from that State, and let it be added that I have never had cause to regret my adventure.

Another new experience awaited the Maharaja in the shape of pheasant-shooting at the place of Lord Greenway in Hampshire. The Maharaja was accompanied here by Major Grimble, the European aide-de-camp whom he had known for some time past, but who was now definitely added to the staff. It was he too who initiated the Maharaja into the mysteries of fox-hunting, and helped him through his first experience. They had two days' excellent shooting, in which the Maharaja took his full share, but what appealed most to his love of method was the clock-work precision with which all the arrangements were carried out. Not a beater was out of his place, and not a hitch occurred to mar the enjoyment of the guests.

VIII

On the 16th January the Maharaja was again in Baroda, and not long afterwards he set out on two short tours of inspection to see for himself the ravages wrought by the floods. It is not unusual to see in an Indian village the doleful remains of a house with walls gaping and roof collapsed, for the people have not that sense of civic duty

which impels an owner in the public interest to remove what is unsightly. Here, however, the case was different. Whole rows of houses in varying stages of dilapidation proclaimed the havoc that the water had done, but thanks to the efficient measures taken by the Dewan, who had both justly and generously put the necessities of the stricken people before considerations of finance, the peasantry who in the face of dire calamity usually show an exemplary patience and fortitude, were on the whole satisfied to hope the best, and beyond offering consolation and sympathy the Maharaja found little to do. There was, however, no doubt that the people found comfort in his presence among them. On his return to Baroda, shortly before he left again for Europe, he held a Durbar at which he distributed various tokens of his appreciation of the work in the floods, and took occasion in the course of a short address to allude to the magnificent response of the well-to-do classes and to the unexpected resilience of the poorer subjects.

Chapter Twenty

RECENT YEARS

ONE notable event marked the recent years of the period which is covered by this history. When the floods had done their worst, and the work of reconstruction had passed from the sphere of initiative into that of routine, the administration pursued its placid way once more. No startling innovations were made. It was a period rather of consolidation and improvement. Where the wheels were creaking they were oiled; the existing institutions were overhauled in order that the best possible use might be made of them. The Railways, the earnings of which were disquietingly low, came under scrutiny; the whole system of Local Self-Government was re-examined; irrigation, which the disappointment of earlier years had neglected, received a new impulse; fresh schemes were devised for the extension of the Co-operative system upon progressive lines, and special attention was given to education, which had shown a tendency to stagnate. The vigorous administration of the Dewan, Rao Bahadur V. T. Krishnama Chari, tended rather to improve the quality than to increase the quantity of institutions, for there had perhaps been a tendency to be content with paper achievements and numerical progress. The number of schools was increasing and the number of pupils; but were they profiting by the instruction? Co-operation had on paper made enormous strides, but were the societies working on the right lines? The elective principle had long ago been introduced into local bodies which were functioning according to plan, but was the machinery the best that could be devised, and above all, was the ideal in a fair way to being realized of reviving the Village Councils, the indigenous institution of ancient

India which the Maharaja had cherished much earlier in his reign?

Domestic politics savoured to King Edward of the parish pump, and the parish pump is the symbol of them to many others beside the King. The story of Baroda during the last fifty years has little of that dramatic interest which belongs to a history punctuated with wars and with foreign crises. It is the story of a State which has emerged from respectable medievalism—for the Maratha government was neither barbaric nor uncivilized, and only conformed to the spirit of the times—into the modern times of wider thought, of more settled government, and of greater care for the interests of the people on whom the prosperity of the State depended. In fifty years, or little more, the Baroda State had advanced from the reign of Henry VII to the reign of Victoria with this exception, that the doubtful blessings of democracy, which now depend upon the votes of milliners' assistants and factory hands, have so far been withheld. That, rightly considered, is in itself a drama, though it is not a melodrama.

II

The last innovation to be introduced into Baroda State was that wonderful inspiration of Lord Baden-Powell, which has now spread all over the world. In 1919 the first body of Boy Scouts was formed in Baroda City, and in the following year Navsari took a hand in the movement. It is said that there was, at first, some opposition, not only because of its novelty, but also because people of advanced political views were nervous lest the object underlying the organization should somehow clash with their pet obsession of the moment, and it was found advisable to relax the rules a little to meet their wishes. But Baroda would not be Baroda if an idea, eagerly welcomed by the whole world, had been overcome by the

forces of reaction or, if the word is preferred, Radicalism. It may seem strange that two words which are supposed to be diametrically opposite in meaning can be offered as alternatives, and yet there is justification for the seeming anomaly. For the Radical politician, the root-and-branch man who will be satisfied with nothing less than the total disappearance of the English from India, is the same man who in moments of perfervid excitement raises the slogan of 'Back to the Vedas', and demands that the Englishman shall take away with him all that he has borrowed from the Western world wherewith to equip India; so that those whose aims would seem to be ultra-radical are those whose vision of a reconstructed India are ultra-conservative.

The Maharaja, however, was well aware of the influence for good which the Boy Scout movement had had in training the younger generation to become good citizens. Enough has been said already in the pages of this history to prove that His Highness is no faddist; he will not countenance anything which is mere imitation for the sake of imitation; the idea of forming troops of Boy Scouts for the purpose of dressing them up in picturesque uniforms would have seemed to him ridiculous and contemptible. It was all part of his scheme of education. Here was a movement which was worth his support because it taught discipline and team work, and because it fostered habits of social service. That is why, when the movement had become firmly established, the Government of the State was willing to spend money upon it, and to encourage it to the best of its power. The troops are flourishing; the boys are enthusiastic; there are outcasts among them, and in far-away Okhamandal a troop of the once turbulent Vaghers testifies to the catholicity of the idea.

And down in that same Okhamandal on the Kathiawar

Sea the infant Port of Okha is making head against the competition of the older ports and the rivalry of the newer. Political difficulties, faintly sketched in a previous chapter, have hitherto denied to Baroda the full advantages to which she feels herself entitled. The customs revenue which she is permitted to enjoy suffices to make both ends meet, but with the adjustment of those same difficulties there is every hope that the enterprise will have more than justified itself. In the work of consolidating, strengthening, and developing those activities which the enterprise of the Maharaja has called into being, Port Okha for a long time to come will take a prominent place.

III

On the 4th January 1929 Prince Pratap Sinh, grandson of the Maharaja and his heir, was married to Shanta Bai, second daughter of Sardar Mansing Rao Ghorpade of Kolhapur. The bridegroom, who was born on the 29th June 1908, very early lost both his father and his mother, and his grandfather took upon himself the care of the little orphan and charged himself with his education. At the age of 10 he went to the Rajkumar College of Rajkot, and afterwards joined the Baroda High School. At 13 he went to Europe for a short time, and after his return to India he was put in charge of English tutors, with whose help he completed his education in the usual way. A certain youthful shyness has occasionally been mistaken for gaucherie; those who know him better and have learned to value his qualities have found him a genial, pleasant companion, entirely free from affectation or any insistence on his own rank. Dignified and courteous to those beneath him in the social scale, he treats his grandfather's Ministers as his equals and colleagues, and while he listens with respect in the Executive Council to the counsels of

his more experienced elders, he has opinions of his own which, even if one differs, are nevertheless both thoughtful and sensible. The writer may be accused of partiality: be it so, but it is the friendship of the Prince that has made him partial. The Maharaja stands alone in the State. He concedes no power to the Princes, and to a certain extent directs the lives of the younger generations; it is sometimes difficult to remember that the pleasant unassuming youth, who has little to-day but his title, his ample allowance, and his sterling good sense, may to-morrow, if fate so wills, be the autocratic master of two millions. That, too, was the fortune of the Maharaja, and it is one of the astonishing things in his career that from the first he entered upon the right path and never left it. It is fortunate indeed for Baroda that his heir gives such favourable promise.

Of the bride it is not permitted to an Englishman to know much. She is a girl from Kolhapur, the State where the Princes claim direct descent from Shivaji, of the Ghorpade family, whose blood, it would seem, is better than their fortune. The Princess, Shanta Bai, is seven years younger than her bridegroom, and is beginning to learn English. She was the choice of the Maharaja himself assisted by two ladies, by the time-honoured method of examining the photographs of aspirants; but it is said that the Prince also was consulted, for his grandfather the Maharaja, true to his principles, waived the privilege of forcing a bride upon his heir.

The details of a Hindu wedding are always picturesque, and contain much poetical symbolism. In essentials the ceremony is the same, as indeed it is in Europe, whether the parties are royal princes or humble commoners, but the customs differ according to nationality. The two recognized forms of marriage are the Brahma and the Asura, the main distinction being that in the former the



SHRIMANT YUVARAJ PRATAP SINGH GAEKWAR
Grandson and heir apparent of the Maharaja

bride is given away, while in the latter she is virtually sold. And in spite of the numerous details which accompany the elaborate ceremony, there are only two that are essential. The first is the invocation to Agni, the Vedic god of fire, corresponding we might say in Christian rites of a certain type to the blessing of the holy water, and around the sacred fire the bride and bridegroom proceed in the crucial rite known as the Saptapadi or the Seven Steps. The first six of these denote respectively friendship, strength, wealth, happiness, children, and pleasure; the seventh is the sum of all, and till that is taken the marriage is incomplete and revocable. This done, the husband and wife, now bound together for all eternity by an indissoluble tie, make obeisance to the marital fires (for fire, the symbol of purification, plays a large part in these ceremonies) and go out under the stars to observe the constellation of the Great Bear.¹ This would seem to have some remote and indistinct connexion with astrology, in which the Hindu is a firm believer, since it is of the stars that the wife prays for long life for her husband, and the fruit of the womb for herself.

There are, however, two other ceremonies which ought not to be omitted, though it does not appear that the marriage would be invalidated if they were. These are the giving away of the bride, on the time-honoured and almost universal principle that a woman is always in tutelage of a man, and the reception of the bridegroom by the bride's father in token that he is content. In the marriage of the Prince this latter rite was not performed at its proper time and place, because the lengthy procession from the Lakshmi Vilas Palace to the other end of the town took so long that time was running short. It took place later.

The festivities, which included not only the subsidiary

¹ Known to Hindus as Saptarishi or the Seven Rishi (Sages).

ceremonies, but also entertainments of a more general nature—arena sports and a children's gathering, which are always features of Baroda rejoicing, as well as a garden-party and a banquet after the European manner—lasted from the 1st to the 6th January. They began with the quaint traditional rite of inviting the family gods, which is carried out by presenting the god with a coco-nut and some rice, and by reading out in the temple, presumably to the priest, the words of the actual invitation sent to mortal and less exalted guests. In the case of this royal wedding the invitation was extended to the Throne in the Palace, but the authentic account is silent about the procedure. These duties were given to Prince Udaisinh Rao, the grandson of the Maharaja through his third son the late Shivaji Rao. On the 3rd January the Maharaja, accompanied by the bride's father and by the Dewan, drove in state to invite the Resident in person, and was of course received with every honour as usual. This pretty and gracious little ceremony is, in effect, an invitation to His Majesty the King-Emperor, whose local representative the Resident is, and the imaginative symbolism involved lends a touch of poetry to what would otherwise be a lifeless and formal proceeding. But the culminating day was the 4th, when the Prince, in bridal array and wearing the wedding crown, the golden tassels of which almost concealed his features, and attended by servants in gorgeous green and gold, went on an elephant in the company of his sisters to the place appointed for the marriage. The Maharaja with his princely guests followed on foot, and behind them came the principal officers of State and all the other privileged nobles and gentlemen. It was a long and tedious walk. The day was none too cool, especially at 4.30 in the afternoon, and the rather absurd convention which obliges a European, not in Baroda alone but all over India, to wear a dress suitable for Piccadilly in the

spring, did not make it any the more comfortable. But it was no time to think of personal discomfort. The pace of an elephant is majestic, but it is painfully slow, and all Baroda was there to see and to take its fill of the sight. The long route was marked by serried ranks of dark faces, eager, happy, and expectant—and silent! Here and there an officious policeman, anxious to do something where nothing was needed, drove in a few stragglers who had overstepped the official line. And so in time the procession reached the Nazarbag Palace.

The crucial rite of the Saptapadi was performed while the guests were receiving the customary offerings of attar and pan at the hands of the Maharaja and his assistants. All that the company was privileged to witness was the long recitation of Sanskrit invocations by the priests, while between the couple standing face to face was held a long cloth doing duty as a curtain. At the appropriate moment the curtain fell, and bride and bridegroom, to the accompaniment of showers of rice, saw one another for the first time. And so the day fell, and Baroda had taken to her arms her future Maharani.

IV

In January 1930 the city of Baroda was *en fête* to receive the Viceroy and Lady Irwin, for a three days' visit. The usual programme had been arranged, but special precautions had to be taken in view of the attempt upon the Viceregal train some few days before. Happily no untoward incident marred the visit, the climax of which, as on similar occasions, was in the speeches at the official banquet. An added interest was lent to these because of the impending, and as it then seemed imminent, report on the destinies of India by the Simon Commission. Dealing with this part of the subject His Highness said:

‘We are once more on the edge of an approaching crisis, and

I pray God to give a right judgement to all those who have the destinies of India in their keeping. I am specially glad to acknowledge that under Your Excellency's wise guidance the importance of the Indian States is receiving fuller recognition than it has ever before received and that their voice will be heard at the Conference which Your Excellency announced the other day. All my life long I have striven, so far as was given to one man to do, to uphold the dignity of the States, and their future has been my deep and abiding concern. We are proud of our ancient privileges, we are proud of our century-old alliance with the British Crown, and we earnestly hope that whatever be the fate of India, those privileges and those friendly relations will in no wise be disturbed or altered. I would say, if I may venture to speak my mind, that the points to which, in the new order of things to be, we hold as especially vital to our welfare are these, first, the need for the complete autonomy of the States in internal affairs; secondly, the strict observance of our treaties both in the letter and in the spirit; next, the establishment of an independent Court of Arbitration to which both sides can appeal as of right and whereby all differences can be composed; and lastly, the devising of some means whereby the States will be able to speak with weight in all matters that are common between them and the rest of India. Long and anxious thought has convinced me that only so can the States enjoy their rightful place, and that only so will British India and the States advance together in quietness and confidence towards their appointed goal.'

The Viceroy replied in the customary guarded terms. He promised careful consideration of all matters affecting the States, when the eagerly-awaited Report should be in the hands of the Government of India :

'Your Highness has also spoken of the establishment of an independent Court of Arbitration. In this matter Your Highness shares the desire of most of the Princes for a free resort to arbitration in cases where they differ from the Government of India. This, as you know, is one of the subjects dealt with in the report of the Butler Committee, who attach great importance

to the free adoption of the procedure laid down by the Government of India in 1920 for employment in such cases. . . . Another point which Your Highness considered vital to the welfare of the States was the devising of some means whereby they can speak with equal voice on matters of common interest to themselves and the rest of India. This also is a matter to which the Butler Committee paid particular attention, and if the machinery contemplated by their report to provide for Committees in matters of common concern takes practical shape, there can, I think, be no doubt that any arrangement arrived at will provide that the views of the States should be given consideration commensurate with the important relations they bear to the affairs of India as a whole.'

The novel note in their speeches was the more definite claim, and the more definite recognition of the importance of the States in the Indian polity. We need not pretend that the existence of the States had been ignored in the past, at any rate by the Government of India, whatever glamour of fairyland, or it may be of some vastly different region, may have surrounded them in the eyes of the ordinary individual. But neither Lord Curzon's Procrustean uniformity nor Lord Minto's theory of differentiation satisfied the fundamental principle that below the varying conditions, which practical good sense must needs acknowledge, there lay the common foundations of Indian India—the kind of Government which most nearly approached Swaraj, in the sense that it was truly Indian, as exemplified by the independence which all enjoyed in internal affairs, and the autocratic power of the Ruler. The Maharaja had never ceased to resent interference on the ground that it tended to destroy the distinctive nature of the Government, and to injure the prestige of the Ruler in the eyes of his subjects. Perhaps he was more outspoken, perhaps he was more far-seeing than most; but now in their later years each Prince had to envisage for himself the possibility of the reaction of a democratic

India upon his own State, and the recognition of the inevitable implications drew them closer together than they had ever been before. The Princes claimed to be considered as an aristocratic *bloc*, and second only in importance to British India; they could no longer be treated as isolated units. It is a just claim and a reasonable one, it is the claim for which the Maharaja has always stood; for apart from the difference of caste, creed, colour, custom, language, and the rest, in which certain facile doctrinaires profess to see the insuperable obstacles to Indian nationhood, how can that nationhood ever be achieved if one third of the country be politically banished to the world of Valhalla? The welfare of India is the welfare of the whole, and in serving the cause of the States without let or hindrance, the Government and its representatives are serving the cause of Imperial India, and therefore of the Empire. It was right and fitting that the Maharaja should see, in the evening of his life, some recognition, however partial and imperfect, of the principle for which with varying fortunes he has striven so unwearyingly.

Shortly before leaving for Europe the Maharaja opened the new Waterworks, called after the heir apparent the Pratap Sinh lake. These were designed to supplement the original Ajwa Works, which, it will be remembered, were among the first and finest achievements of his reign. The Ajwa Works were sufficient in all normal years for the supply of the City, but if there should be two or three successive years of drought, as might so easily happen, it was thought that the supply might run perilously low; and for a long time past the authorities had been casting about for a scheme which should combine economy with efficiency. These ideas had at last taken shape.

The Maharaja, who had not fully recovered from an attack of gout and was suffering from a sore throat,

took the opportunity to review the Public Works policy since the time of Madhav Rao and the minority. It was a record in which he could take a pardonable pride. Apart from the capital there were waterworks in thirteen provincial towns and even in villages; great public buildings had sprung up, often artistic and always adequate; railways had expanded from a little timid line of nineteen miles to upwards of 700 miles of road; Okha Port had been built and had a promising future before it. Nor had the cultural side of such works been neglected. In many of the public buildings, in the lay-out of the public park and the Palace gardens, there was much to delight the eye and to give to the Baroda citizen a patriotic pride in his own country, to make him feel the effect of noble works and the degradation of squalor. In one respect there had been failure, and the Maharaja did not disguise it. Surface irrigation had not justified itself, in spite of the lavish sums spent upon it. The revenue, which is the sure index of its popularity, had barely sufficed for its maintenance. This was due to various factors: the nature of the soil had not been sufficiently studied; the designs were sometimes faulty, but more than all, the flatness of the country denied water to the ryot when he most needed it, especially where the reservoirs depended upon the rain. On the other hand, the ryot, by the liberal grant of State loans, had been encouraged to use the subsoil water, and the multiplication of wells was evidence of the Government's wisdom in this respect. A dramatic touch was given to the speech by the first public recognition of Pratap Sinh as Yuvaraj.

Shortly after this, all Baroda was rejoicing over the birth of an heir in the second generation. On the 2nd April 1930 Shanta Bai, the wife of the Yuvaraj, gave birth to a son. To be a great-grandfather is not a novel experience to the Maharaja, but it was a satisfaction to

him to feel that, in the natural course of human life, the succession was secured for many years to come.

V

When in April 1930 the Maharaja set sail for Europe, he was little better than an invalid. A long and persistent attack of gout had kept him to his own rooms in the Palace, and when the duties of his position obliged him to venture out, it was in a wheeled chair or at most a motor-car. The first news from Paris was not encouraging, but he gradually improved in health.

Meanwhile the chain of events begun with the appointment of the Statutory Commission under the Government of India Act 1919 was lengthening. It had been decided that after the issue of the report of the Commission, which was published in June 1930, there should be held in London a Round Table Conference for representatives both of British India and the States to confer with His Majesty's Ministers in London, and if possible to arrive at an agreed constitution. It will be recalled that under the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms a Chamber of Princes,¹ where the States could co-ordinate their policy and exchange views on their relations with one another and with British India, was established.² The Maharaja of Baroda, in common with his brother Princes of Hyderabad and Mysore, had hitherto shown but a lukewarm interest in this new body. It seemed to him to be unreal. The subjects of discussion were usually too trivial to be worth a journey to Delhi,³ and the grandiose idea of a co-ordinated policy *vis-à-vis* one another and British India seemed to fade away into insignificant detail. The Government of India filled most of the allotted places

¹ The Indian name is 'Narendra Mandal'.

² Montagu-Chelmsford Report, para. 306.

³ Letter to Jamsaheb, *Selected Letters*, vol. iii, No. 1508, p. 965, dated 21.9.1917; also letter to the Maharaja of Bikaner, No. 1512, p. 967, dated 30.9.1917.

with representatives of the Chamber. Hyderabad and Mysore were added in the shape of representatives of their Rulers, and Baroda was also brought in by the issue of an invitation to the Maharaja Gaekwar.

But His Highness was still in France and it was doubtful whether he would be able to take an active part in the proceedings. The Government of India therefore permitted him to nominate a substitute in case he could not attend himself. The Maharaja, of course, nominated his Minister, Rao Bahadur V. T. Krishnama Chari, who was to serve as an Adviser when His Highness attended in person.

As time went on the news from Europe improved with every mail. Delighted Baroda heard that their Maharaja intended to be present in person, and so on the 12th November 1930, when the historic Conference was opened in the House of Lords by His Majesty the King, the Maharaja of Baroda was found in his place. The King read his speech of welcome and encouragement, and according to custom retired. The Prime Minister followed, and after him the Maharaja was the first to speak with the authentic voice of India. He was commendably brief, so brief that the speech can be given in full:

'On this momentous occasion in the history of India and the Empire, it is my privilege to address to you a few words on behalf of the Indian States' Delegation here assembled in the Conference which His Majesty the King-Emperor has to-day been graciously pleased to open.

We are deeply beholden to His Majesty, to whom I beg you, Mr. Prime Minister, to convey our sentiments of loyalty to his Throne and Person.

These historic precincts have witnessed many conferences fraught with import; but I doubt if ever before they have been the scene of such a one as this, when the issues at stake involve the prosperity and contentment of India's millions and the greatness of the British Empire.

By the concession in generous measure of the aspirations of

the Princes and Peoples of India, and by that alone, can realization be given to the noble words of Victoria, the Great Queen, as expressed in a famous Proclamation.

They are these: "In their prosperity will be our strength;
in their contentment our security; in their
gratitude our best reward."

May we all labour whole-heartedly, with mutual trust and goodwill, for the attainment of so great an end.'

More was not needed; the Conference had not begun its work. The Maharaja summed up, in a few words, the general feeling of loyalty to the Throne and the hopes that were rising high in every Indian breast.

Thereafter the Round Table Conference sat continuously for two calendar months at St. James's Palace, where there was visible testimony to the Maharaja's long and influential connexion with the advancement of India. Among the pictures on the walls of the Ambassador's Room, used by the delegates as a lounge, is Val Prinsep's great canvas of the Proclamation Durbar at Delhi on the 1st January 1877, to announce the assumption by Queen Victoria of the title of Empress of India. In embossed letters on the frame the names of the most important Ruling Princes are given, and that of 'Baroda' shows His Highness, then a lad of thirteen, closely following the proceedings. His membership of the Conference thus made a direct personal link—the only one possible—between the historic ceremony of fifty-three years ago and a momentous Conference which set the ship of State in the Indian Empire towards federal government.

The presence of the Maharaja exerted a strong and broad-minded influence upon the inner counsels of the States' Delegation. By reason of his seniority, his great services to the cause of Indian progress and the high respect in which he was held, the Maharaja took the first place on many occasions.

He presided frequently at private meetings of the Delegation and threw the weight of his long experience into the scale of the federal solution which was adopted. This was not a new idea to him. In November 1917 the Maharaja of Nabha had proposed a scheme of which the basic idea was Federation, and Sayaji Rao approved generally but added with characteristic caution, 'It would be impossible for us, burdened as we are with the manifold cares of State, to work out the details with the meticulous care which they deserve'.¹ But the whole question of the States was being canvassed at that time in view of the impending visit of Mr. Montagu to India in pursuance of the famous Declaration.

The Maharaja set to work to consider the issues which involved the States. He had already drawn up a scheme which did not indeed include the word Federation or cover the whole ground of that rather ambiguous word, but which foreshadowed closer relations between the States and British India :

'I commend any proposition to give to Princes a greater voice in the solution not only of administrative questions which affect common interests, but also in the larger Imperial concerns. Not only by virtue of nationality and territorial juxtaposition but by contributions to Imperial income and defence they are entitled to consideration in the settlement of Imperial affairs.'²

In 1917 he threw this idea into more concrete shape, claiming a definite representation for the Princes, the establishment of a House of Princes' Representatives, and the right to a seat on the Viceroy's Executive Council.

Lord Chelmsford and Mr. Montagu did not go quite so far as this. They felt that 'the independence of the States in matters of internal administration carries with it the counter-obligation of non-interference in British

¹ *Selected Letters*, vol. iii, No. 1533, p. 977, dated 7.11.1917.

² *Opinion*, dated 1st Nov. 1907.

Indian affairs'.¹ But quoting His Highness as an advocate for the development of the Annual Conference into a permanent Council, they suggested not only the setting up of this body but also of a Standing Committee to whom certain questions could be referred. But while all their proposals were influenced by the doctrine of mutual non-interference, they admitted frankly that the vision of the future India seemed to take shape in some form of federation, and they looked forward to the time when the States would be drawn 'still closer into the orbit of the Empire'. That time, if it be given to a historian to assume the mantle of the prophet, seems to be imminent.

Shortly after the opening of the Conference the Maharaja was entertained by the East India Association. In addressing them he could not, of course, enter into any detail, since the Conference had hardly begun to work in earnest. But all the old sentiments were there, which he had cherished for so many years. He spoke of their common citizenship of one motherland, 'united by the desires and aspirations of our common nationality'. He pleaded for freedom to develop

'according to their individual genius while they share in the ideals and the material advantages which are inherent in their common citizenship. . . . This freedom to develop is the urgent need of India, this is her earnest desire.'

He sounded once more the note of national solidarity, of a political basis which would 'recall her ancient traditions and foster a manly spirit in her Peoples', and once more proclaimed his faith in the contribution which India could still offer to the world of thought and in the great part which she could play on the stage of Empire.

'Give them freedom for so great a role, and that they may realize their aspirations, give them freedom to shape their

¹ Montagu-Chelmsford Report, para. 299.

destinies in accordance with the old-time genius of their race, in co-operation with the best traditions of the West. In a word, let India now at long last find her soul and take the place which is not only her privilege but her due as a self-governing unit in the British Commonwealth of Nations.'

The Maharaja also made a most impressive speech in the closing discussion in plenary session of the Conference.

VI

Here we may leave the Maharaja in his new mood of rejuvenation after a long interval of what seemed to Baroda retirement and eclipse. 'Richard's himself again.'

In all his various reforms he was actuated solely by his desire for the perfection of his State and the good of his subjects. He was ahead of his age: he generally has been. All, or nearly all, of his measures have depended for success upon the goodwill and the co-operation of the people, and the people are slow to abandon the old conservative ways, especially in India. If the people did not want to be educated, there were many ways of avoiding compulsion, and if the officers charged with the administration were themselves not convinced, the measure was sure to be carried out half-heartedly, in a spirit not of enthusiasm but of obedience. If the technical school received but a 'faint response' to the Maharaja's efforts, it now attracts pupils from distant parts of India. If the railways do not pay a handsome dividend, it is because the first consideration has been the convenience and the welfare of the people, which has prompted the Maharaja to push through lines commercially unprofitable.

He has shown an admirable perseverance. The people are slowly awakening to the wisdom of his measures. As in the case of foreign travel, those who once looked askance are eagerly pressing forward, and those who came to curse

have remained to bless. The twelve years between 1882 and 1894 may be called the blossoming period of the greater reforms during the reign. It was then that schemes tentatively begun ripened into fruition, that new ideas took shape, and that the reforming spirit was most vigorous. Since that time there have been other reforms, but the years have been principally occupied in consolidating the ground that has been won, in perfecting or improving the first crude ideas, in keeping the movements abreast with the marching times. Baroda has been transformed so far as a Government can transform it, both mentally and materially, for in the ultimate analysis a Government can only give the people their chance or smooth away their difficulties. Science, art, literature—all that makes for the education and the cultural advance of a people—railways, hospitals, irrigation, municipalities—all that concerns their material welfare—received their due meed of attention. As the Maharaja said, work is his hobby and administration his passion. Baroda long enjoyed a special reputation for good government: other States have come forward, but she has at least some claims to be regarded as the pioneer.

The years go by. The Maharaja has reached and passed the zenith of a man's life, but his ardour is not abated. Baroda pursues her placid way, while Bombay is torn by industrial strikes of mixed complexion, and Meerut beholds the spectacle, uncommon in India, of a Communist trial. Ripples from the outer wave of democracy occasionally wash the shores of Baroda, recede, and leave her very much as before. The apostles of that clumsy slogan, 'non-violent non-co-operation', visit Baroda, are received in triumph by crowds of students making themselves pleasantly ridiculous and then evaporate in ebullient rhetoric. The wretched strife of Hindu and Musulman, which flares up so distressingly in unexpected places, is

not wholly unknown, but if occasionally there is some small bonfire, it only serves to show up in higher relief the more violent conflagrations elsewhere. The advocates of temperance, as fiery as the liquor they hope to abolish, may seek to propagate their creed by over-enthusiastic efforts. But those things pass. The house of Baroda stands firm because it is not built upon the sand. And the Maharaja has been the builder of it.

EPILOGUE

SELDOM did Fate play a stranger trick than when she selected the little boy of Kavhana and placed him on the throne of Baroda. Seldom has there been such ample justification of a leap in the dark. Even the nightmare of Malhar Rao's misrule turned, in the end, to Baroda's advantage. The choice of Madhav Rao, Jamna Bai, and the British Government was a crisis in the history of Baroda State, and that it turned out to be a happy crisis is due to the character of the man himself.

But although the Maharaja was in many ways ahead of his age, he was none the less the product of it. The Maratha Empire was no creation of robber chiefs, endowed with military skill which enabled them to overthrow and plunder at will the degenerate descendants of the Turkis and Afghans who had founded the Empire of the Moghuls. It was built upon solid foundations. Originally conceived as a national movement against the usurping foreigner, and as a religious movement against the bigotry of Aurangzib, it grew into a mighty empire which rivalled the Moghuls in stability and in extent. The great Sivaji was, like Napoleon, not only a warrior but a statesman, and the system which he borrowed from the Moghuls, adapting and moulding it upon Hindu lines according to his liking, was not very unlike that which exists to-day, in outline though not in detail, in conception though not in method. The greatest of the Peshwas, Baji Rao, Balaji Viswanath, Balaji Baji, and Madhav Rao, raised the Marathas to a pinnacle of splendour which connoted a firm and solid foundation, and the battle of Panipat shook terribly but did not destroy the structure. If any single event can be said to mark the decline and fall of this majestic empire, perhaps it is the murder of Narayana Rao. From that time onwards dissension and

intrigue were at work to destroy the nation in the selfish interest of a few. The empire fell into lesser hands. Baji Rao II was, and still is, regarded as the evil genius of the Marathas, and, had it not been for him, Marathas might still be reigning at Poona. As it was, the empire fell in fragments; Satara, Nagpur, Kolhapur, Gwalior, Indore, and Baroda were reorganized as separate States, and the last four have survived the changes and chances of a policy which has varied from time to time according to the political creed.

These Maratha States were governed upon the established system, and according to the Hindu ideas of the time. That the times were turbulent was no fault of theirs. Their methods may not have been in tune with British political ideas, but they were not slow to accept advice. The intervention of Colonel Walker, a true friend of the State, had a profound influence upon the fortunes of Baroda. The foundations of that State had been firmly laid by Pilaji, and especially by Damaji Rao; if subsequent Princes varied in temperament and in fortune, and if none of them takes high rank as ruler, at least they carried on the Government of the country and bequeathed a heritage to their successors. Malhar Rao is the Marino Faliero of Baroda.

It was therefore upon a solid foundation that Madhav Rao had to build the walls, and the Maharaja to complete the superstructure. The rule was autocratic, and autocratic it should remain. To this day there is nothing, except his own good sense and public opinion, to prevent the Maharaja from passing the most fantastic laws, or indeed from abrogating all laws, from using the entire State revenues for his own gratification, or from passing any order, good or bad, which might occur to the fancy of the moment, until the Supreme Government stepped in with the warning that such things must cease. But the

Maharaja has never ruled, and has never wanted to rule, on any such bizarre plan. There are times and places in which the great Minister has been everything, and the Prince a puppet ruler; there are times and places in which the overshadowing personality of the Ruler has dwarfed every one around him. The Maharaja fits into neither picture. His was no doubt the outstanding personality, but he had the wisdom to gather able men about him, to take counsel with them, and to accept their advice.

There was a time when the people were thought to exist for the Ruler; with new political thought the opposite theory prevailed, that the Ruler existed for the people. With characteristic enthusiasm some of the Princes carried the theory to its logical extreme: Sindhia for example worked without a Dewan,¹ and toiled patiently through piles of papers sent up to him from all Departments. His officers were there to obey orders, not to give them, and though he consulted them and worked amazingly hard for the good of his State, he missed the great essential, that the first duty of a Prince is to fill his State with capable men and to cultivate a sense of proportion in himself. We are none of us infallible, not even the most exalted. At the beginning of his career the Maharaja fell into this error; he too toiled at innumerable trifling things, and suffered the consequences. It was not long before he realized that it was not the business of the Prince to waste his time over petty detail, but the tradition was at first so strong that nothing could be done without the personal orders of the Ruler. Such a tradition might have worked well enough when the times were simpler, and especially if the Prince was not troubled with too tender a conscience, but as administration grew more complex the thing was impossible. He began to decentralize, but according to his own Ministers he was still doing too

¹ *Madhav Rao Sindia of Gwalior*, by Bull and Haksar, pp. 121-2.

much, and that unnecessarily. His health broke down. He went to Europe, and from that time onwards he was for many years liable to nervous strain. With the advance of the years he has learnt wisdom by experience, and by delegating much of his power to his Minister and Council he has not only gained time for much needed leisure, but he has been able to devote himself to such matters as really concern the Sovereign.

Not of course that this later phase implies indifference to what is going on in Baroda: far from it. Not only is he in close touch with his Minister, personally when in Baroda and by letter when abroad, but all important orders are sent to him and are subject to his revision. A passion for administration and a passionate devotion to his State are the first characteristics of the man. He is gifted with greater imagination, and his foreign travels have given him a much wider horizon than his subjects possess. The vision of ultimate realization is before him, and he is content to wait. The walls of social tradition, especially when they are fortified by religious sanction, do not easily yield to the attacks of social reform, even when they are led by so notable a figure as the Maharaja. The ideal of universal education cannot be attained until the people themselves really understand the object of it, and unless the teachers and their masters can rise to the height of the Maharaja's own outlook. Much has been achieved—in the sphere of social reform by the almost complete abolition of the external disabilities of caste, and by the changed attitude towards women and the lowest castes; in the sphere of education by the definite numerical results, and by the infiltration of a genuine desire for knowledge amongst a section of the people. Much remains to be done because things such as these are like forests, which take 50 or even 100 years to mature, and which demand the patience to wait and the eye of imagination to see. In

some directions the schemes have failed. The people have not responded to his efforts to provide them with irrigation, and whatever they may think of schools, the instinct of the ryots is generally sound in matters agricultural; whatever is wrong may be due to faulty engineering or faulty administration—perhaps even to the want of co-ordinated efforts by the various departments concerned. In trade and commerce too, the sacrifice of State money in a laudable attempt to foster industry in an agricultural country has achieved very little, and in some cases has led to disaster. But all has been done from a reverent devotion to his people, and if the Maharaja has not always achieved success he has at least deserved it.

For he does not belong to Baroda alone. It is there that his activities have lain, because only there has he had the opportunity to put his theories into practice. But fond as he is of the State, anxious as he is to promote its development in every possible way, he has looked forward to the fulfilment of a larger ideal—the ideal of an Indian nation which shall be strong and self-respecting, and which shall be equipped with all that makes nations great, so that India may take her rightful place in the modern world as she did in the ancient. It was for these reasons that he urged his countrymen, and not Baroda alone, to profit by the lessons which Europe had to offer. He pleaded with them to give up the strangling restrictions of caste, and to change their attitude with regard to women. He exhorted them to copy the industrial methods of the West, and to eschew such puerilities as the burning of foreign cloth—being himself convinced, as he should have convinced any audience not blinded by political passion, that only by supplying the needs of India by an output of quantity and quality could India hope to compete with foreign markets. He pressed upon them the advantages of foreign travel which brought

young men into contact with other cultures, widened their outlook, and while showing India in its proper perspective, showed also where the defects lay and suggested remedies for her disease. He warned them that too great a reliance upon a paternal Government would surely bring the nation to ruin, unless the people were educated 'to a sense of their paramount importance and dignity in the social structure'. As no Indian Prince has travelled so widely, so no Indian Prince has been so eagerly sought for all over India to teach and to guide, to give others the benefit of his experience in travel, and of his excursions into literature. At Bombay, at Ahmedabad, at Calcutta he delivered speeches of first-class importance on occasions worthy of them; at Lahore, Madras, Allahabad, Ranoli, Bangalore, and Benares he was invited either to preside or to deliver addresses. No estimate of the Maharaja would be complete which did not take into account the cardinal fact that, though his life was primarily given to Baroda, it was given through Baroda to all India.

No wonder that at the zenith of his powers he was popular. It was in December 1906 that he made his great speech on Indian Industries, as the Inaugural Address at the Second Indian Industrial Conference, and both his appearance and the speech itself were received with deafening applause. But revolution was in the air in Bengal. All through 1905 and 1906 Calcutta was violently agitated by the famous Partition,¹ and the Congress of 1906 was held there at the close of the year, and was therefore almost coincident with the Industrial Conference. Swadeshi was one of the principal planks in the revolutionary programme, and the movement was zealously supported by the brilliant Arobindo Ghose, who was the disciple of the Maratha Tilak, and had been a

¹ *Indian Unrest*, by Sir Valentine Chirol, p. 50.

Professor at the Baroda College and the Maharaja's Secretary during one of his visits to Kashmir. In 1907, under the influence of the Swadeshi movement and the boycott, 'the list of outrages and deeds of violence' had begun, and culminated in murder on the 30th April 1908, when Mrs. and Miss Kennedy were killed by a bomb at Muzafferpur. Such a combination of circumstances, not perhaps very unnaturally, led to a complete misjudgement of the Maharaja. He was a patriot in the truest sense of the word, in that he was ardently striving in word and deed to show his countrymen the more excellent way, and there is not a word in the whole of his long address which any patriotic Englishman might not have uttered. He spoke with obvious sincerity of purpose and in singleness of heart. But with the sturdy independence which he has so often shown, and which is perhaps part of his inheritance as a Maratha Prince, he had already crossed swords with the Government of India on more than one occasion, and the European community drew their own conclusions. So did the Indian anti-British community. He was as much misjudged by the one as by the other. The Swadeshi movement very soon became identified with the political movement; its manifestations in the more dramatic incidents were so peculiarly childish and so obviously the outcome of political passion, that it was impossible to separate the one from the other. Englishmen, in calmer moments, admitted that a movement to develop trade and industry for purely economic reasons was very laudable and worthy of all support; but the issues very soon became confused again, and Swadeshi, as practised in Bengal, became synonymous with disloyalty.

The Maharaja kept strictly to economics :

'Keep to your conservative methods, cling to your orthodox ways of work, and your industries must perish. Such is the inexorable law of the survival of the fittest, and such the

admonition which a true Swadeshi movement ought to give you. . . . Swadeshi can be a genuine economic force under the above conditions. It can be a potent weapon of usefulness if properly understood. . . . But remember that no such movement can be permanently successful unless it involves a determined effort to improve their quality and cheapen their cost, so as to compete successfully with foreign products.’¹

This was a far cry from throwing caps and dhoties on to bonfires. But to make approving references to Swadeshi, however harmless, was then playing with fire. The Maharaja is not a diplomat. Conscious of the purity of his own motives, he does not stop to consider what other people may think; there is nothing in him of that careful examination of all possible sensibilities and reactions which a particular act may offend or set in motion. His own motives are so crystal clear to him that it is unbelievable that they are not equally clear to every one else. If he is asked for an opinion, he gives it; if it is not to the liking of those who ask, why ask at all? Time and again in his letters he uses some outspoken phrase—with perfect courtesy, for courteous he always is—and qualifies it as though he had suddenly realized that it might give offence: ‘I am only speaking as a friend’, or ‘I am merely writing what passes through my mind’. Even in such a simple matter as the refusal of an invitation he scorns to tell a diplomatic untruth, or to invent an excuse which is not the real one. In 1905 it was arranged that the Prince of Wales (now King George) should visit India in the cold weather. His Highness was in Europe and did not mean to leave it; he had gone there for his health, and he judged, or his doctors judged for him, that he ought to stay over a winter. To him, and to his people, it was more important that he should be fit to govern than that he should return

¹ *Speeches and Addresses*, vol. i, p. 194.

to Baroda for a three days' formal visit. The Viceroy was angry. In Sir Sidney Lee's words:

'The Gaekwar proposed to absent himself from India during the Prince of Wales' tour—an absence that would appear to be a slight on the heir to the British throne. Lord Curzon took what was perhaps an unduly severe view of the Gaekwar's desire to leave India, but the King, while regretting the Gaekwar's absence, strongly held that his liberty should not be hampered by Viceregal action. Lord Curzon took the hint and the Gaekwar was able to gratify his wanderlust.'¹

There are two phrases here to which the Maharaja would certainly take exception. He would indignantly deny that any slight was intended, or even that his journey to Europe could be made to look like a slight. And he would refuse to admit that he went to 'gratify his wanderlust'. For though he has expressly said that pomp and ceremony have their value, his practical mind put practical results before mere show; and he could not understand, or perhaps it never occurred to him, that others might think differently. He hates cant. It is better to say nothing at all than to say what you do not mean; it is better to say nothing at all, if you are not going to follow up words with deeds.

This want of diplomatic sense was the cause of half his unpopularity with the Government of India, and with sections of the community. In pressing forward to the great goal of his ambition, the awakening of India from the sleep of a thousand years, and the leading of her into the front rank of nations, he forgot that in a time of unrest an ardent Nationalism was liable to misconstruction. He had in fact no sympathy with revolutionary aims and tactics, and Swaraj with its ultimate goal of democracy had no attractions for him. When men talked of freedom from foreign oppression, he was thinking of another kind

¹ *King Edward VII*, by Sir Sidney Lee, vol. ii, p. 365.

of freedom, the freedom from caste, from outworn creeds, from social restrictions which would enable India to move forward on the path of modern progress. But in the smoke and din of battle men could not differentiate, and to both parties it seemed that he had identified himself with the party of disaffection. The biographers of Sindhia have remarked of the Maharaja of Baroda :

‘He is a taciturn, sensitive, and shy man with the hyperaesthesia of honourable intention. More widely read and travelled than most Ruling Princes, he is withal intellectually curious. In the belief that his motives could never be suspect he had sought to study the psychologies of Indian Mazzinis and to understand their ideals and aspirations.’¹

That with two exceptions is true. The Maharaja is reserved, almost enigmatic, but he is neither taciturn nor shy; he has not the genial *bonhomie* of Sindhia with his jovial cookings in the woods, and his practical jokes on other grandees. Like his brother of Mysore, the impression he leaves is one of grave and dignified cordiality, never that of the rollicking school-boy. He receives you with warmth but not with enthusiasm, and it is not until you know him better that you begin to appreciate his sterling qualities, and to realize the magnetism of his personality. He might have been a Doge of Venice.

Suspicion begets suspicion. The Maharaja held on his way, and the farther he went the more the path of those who misjudged him diverged. Knowing himself to be unwaveringly loyal to the Throne, he did not see any need to be for ever shouting his loyalty from the house-tops; and because his loyalty was silent, because his Nationalism—his own brand of Nationalism—was ardent, and because he put his own value upon isolated incidents, men concluded that he was disloyal and was coquetting with sedition. In Lord Curzon he found an opponent of

¹ *Madhav Rao Sindhia of Gwalior*, by Bull and Haksar, p. 165.

strong will, as ardent a lover of his country as himself, one for whom England had divine work to do in the world; and the fierce energy and the intense convictions of the Viceroy infected all his officers. The War brought the opportunity, and the blast of it blew away the lingering clouds of suspicion for ever.

But the imperious Viceroy had bruised the Maharaja's sense of dignity, which is one of the strongest of his characteristics. He had resented the interference of the Resident because it lowered the dignity and prestige of the Ruler—especially in the eyes of his people, and the humiliation of the Circular was more than he could stand. He is ready to acknowledge his position as the Prince of a small State in relation to the sovereigns of great and powerful countries, but not to abate any jot of it. At Tokyo, where the news came of King Edward's death, the wife of the Ambassador entered the church for the Memorial Service immediately behind the Japanese Princes. The Maharaja was piqued: 'Indian princes', he says, 'are not well treated in these respects in my opinion. An Ambassadors has no business to precede a Prince when her husband is not there.'¹ It is perhaps this feeling as much as, if not more than, any other which has held him back from joining the scheme of Imperial Service troops. He knows that his army is well drilled and can make a brave show on parade; he knows too that, armed as they are, they are helpless against half their number armed with modern weapons. But the choice lies between antiquated guns and modern rifles coupled with British supervision, and anything is better in his view than the spectacle of the limitation of his own power within his own State. And it was for the same reason that his Government have steadily refused to allow British customs officers to interfere or have any hand in

¹ Autograph diary of the Maharaja.

the State customs. These are views which he shares with other Princes. And they are right. The older view was that the Prince was omnipotent over the lives and fortunes of his subjects; if he chose to squander his money upon libertines and favourites, there was no one to say him nay; and if he chose to order a man to instant execution, there was nothing for it but to obey. The old idea survives with a difference. The more advanced Princes are the servants of their people, toiling and sweating on their behalf, but they are none the less the masters, whose lightest word is law, and whose schemes for their people it is dangerous to question. That is what is meant by personal government, of which so much is said but so little is understood. That is what the people like, and that is why now and again the voice of clamour is heard that their Maharaja should return to Baroda, though in truth the administration supervised from Europe runs as smoothly under a capable Dewan as when the Maharaja is present. But the Maharaja is the fountain of all wisdom and all justice, especially when he has so obviously spent his life in trying to improve his State and the condition of his people. It is true that in Baroda there is a system, though not a constitution, under which much of the power has been delegated to the Dewan in Council, but every one knows that a stroke of the pen could abolish the whole thing, and that the orders are issued only with the consent and under the authority of the Maharaja. Anything which damages that conception is to be avoided at all costs.

Things are of course different abroad. In a country where a Duke, or maybe a Duchess, must stand in an underground-railway carriage while the workman lolls on his seat and sucks at his clay, the Maharaja leads the life of an ordinary gentleman of means, treated by all who know him with the respect due to his rank, but liable to be

jostled by the crowd who do not know him. It is told of the Maharaja of Gwalior that once having lost his way in London he was taken under the wing of a workman and his family, that he treated them to supper in what they would have called a 'slap-up restaurant', carried the baby for them, and was greeted with the parting farewell: 'Tommy, you're a damned good chap.'¹ And the story went the round of the English papers how the Maharaja had picked up a little girl who fell at the door of a chemist's shop in Windsor. 'How came you to fall, my little girl?' he asked; to which she replied, 'I didn't come to fall; I came to buy turpentine.' These little human touches endear the Princes to their peoples, and any officer who has served on the personal staff of the Maharaja will bear testimony to his kindness and consideration. It has already been told how when the staff in Europe seemed to be able to do nothing right, and had to bear the brunt of many fits of irritation caused by ill health and depression, the sea blew away these temporary clouds from the Maharaja's mind, and how before many days had passed, he was his own kind and considerate self again.

For all that, he is a strict and exacting master. He cannot tolerate idleness; he can see no reason why any one should trade upon his social position to do nothing. His Sardars must work for their living, if they wish to enjoy the incomes which, according to old custom, they receive from the State. In this respect he treats all alike: his sons were made to work in the State; his grandson and heir is receiving his apprenticeship in the art of government. If his Sardars do not choose to work, they must be content with half their allowance; and his nephews, the sons of his elder brother, are working, one on the Railway, and the other in the Revenue Department. No man has done his duty who has merely passed orders upon papers that

¹ *Madhav Rao Sindia of Gwalior*, by Bull and Haksar, p. 301.

come before him. He must think, he must initiate, he must evolve a policy for himself which will fit in with the general policy of the State. The alertness of his mind, which has not left him with advancing years, is impatient of the dull intelligence that sees no further than its nose, and he is sometimes apt to forget that those whom he censures have not had the opportunity of that broadness of outlook which extensive travel through the world and complete familiarity with most of Western Europe have given him.

Common sense and principle are the guiding stars of his life. He is seldom content with the matter in hand; always the question is asked: is there a principle involved? And this passion for laying down principles is not only due to the administrator's desire to avoid the vain repetitions of incoherent orders; it is inherent in the very structure of the Maharaja's mind. It was this passion which led him to inquire into the meaning and object of religious ceremonies, to the dismay of the ladies and the discomfiture of the priests; it was, it might be said, the same passion which drove him to Europe for the health of his body, the enlargement of his horizon, and the ultimate benefit of his State. A man of retentive memory and of penetrating observation, for he knows more of his officers than any one in the State, he was for ever applying the question of the why and the wherefore to all that came within his orbit in the West, whether it was a glass-blowing factory, an educational institution, or the Paris Exhibition. Much of what he saw he could not apply to Baroda State. He could not, even if he had wanted to, transport to India Gothic architecture, Versailles, or the slums of London. But the alertness of his mind gave point to his criticisms, and his wide reading made him appreciative of the historical interest to be found in such places as Rome, Venice, and Constantinople.

In the alertness of his own mind he could not always make allowances for the shortcomings of others. The appreciation of common sense may differ, even in minds of the same calibre; the standards of value and the sense of proportion are not always the same. Huxley once said of Gladstone, who had accused him of missing a point in his own favour, that a controversial opponent had no right to make such an assumption—perhaps the point was not worth making. And so, when the Maharaja accuses his officers of want of common sense in not detecting some error of detail, it sometimes happens that his officers, with a different sense of proportion, have not thought it worth while to waste time upon. Of the men of lesser intellect he is inclined to be even more impatient; method, principle, common sense—these things are to him second nature, and they are none of them the products of high thinking, wide reading, far journeys, or technical skill. He only asks of men what should be inherent in every man; and when he does not get them, he does not always remember Carlyle's sweeping aphorism, or reflect that men are as God made them.

Proud though he is of his army, whose Commander enjoys the distinction in Durbar of a seat next to the Dewan, the Maharaja has not much of the soldier in his composition. His life was devoted to art and letters when he was not engrossed with the more absorbing task of administration. He collected a considerable library, and he had the curious habit of writing in the margin of the book the date on which he arrived at each stage of his reading. Not only had he read deeply in the philosophy and the history, ancient and modern, of his own country, but his knowledge of the history of Europe provided him with many illustrations to point a moral or enforce a lesson in his speeches. In his great address to the Calcutta Conference in 1906, this feature is conspicuous; the burden of his

theme was the industrial progress of India. He held up to them the warnings of the dead empires. Ancient Egypt 'had abundant resources but failing to note the value of human life, failing to conserve the interests of the working masses, she sank . . . into political servitude and academic decay'.¹ Athens 'faded away like a fragrant memory because she failed to look to the economic basis of her prosperity'.¹ Rome—the special subject of his study in earlier years—fell, and one of the causes of her fall was the fatal gift which Caius Gracchus gave to the people. He wandered on through the causes of modern European prosperity, and he bade his hearers take warning from the failures of the past and profit by the lessons of the present.

Architecture was a special interest as became a Ruler who aspired to adorn, and who has adorned, his capital with fine buildings. He does not impose his ideas upon those who have made the art their life's study: that, as he would say, is not 'common sense'. But he will pore over every detail of a plan, and consider all the harmonies of a model before making his decision; no architect has ever left him in despair because he has insisted upon some Vandal alteration in design. His criticisms of the masterpieces of Europe and of some monuments that are very far from being masterpieces are always shrewd, and, to the lay mind at any rate, generally correct. He knows the value of the arts in the cultural life of a people, and has given practical expression to that conviction in the collection of Eastern and Western Art in the Baroda Museum, as well as in the schools of drawing and music which he has founded, though he has been denied any great appreciation of the noblest and most divine of all the arts there are.

The versatile activity of his mind has resulted in a restlessness which shows itself not only in his travels, but in

¹ *Speeches and Addresses*, pp. 210, 211.

his administration. A critic has ascribed it to the spirit of the age, the breathless bustling spirit of Europe and especially of America. But that is not so. The restlessness of the Maharaja comes rather from an inherent inability to sit still. In his earlier tours he dashed about Europe with a speed that must have been the despair of his staff, on whom fell the duties of packing not only their own possessions, but the public records, and of arranging for accommodation in the next place. In his administration he is for ever experimenting, amending, improving or not improving, but anyhow altering. A system is working well; true, but another may work better; let us try that. A man may be doing fairly well in his post but another might do better: let him be tried. It is a common saying in Baroda that a man, especially if he be recruited in Europe, is, as often as not, never employed in the post for which he was originally engaged. The same critic has truly called this restless spirit 'the fault of his virtues, the weakness of his strength'.

His Ministers, though they do not always approve, are well aware that all is done in the striving after elusive perfection. It is the restlessness of an active mind seeking an outlet. The era of the great reforms is for the moment over. If exhortation and the laying down of principles, if the driving force and the desire of the Ruler could achieve the impossible, Baroda would be the exemplar for the world. That it is not is due in large measure to the weakness of its machinery, for the speed of the fleet is that of the slowest ship. This does not mean that it is intrinsically unsound, but that from a variety of causes, operative everywhere, there is a residue which clogs the wheels. Unimaginative dullness, inefficiency, apathy, incapacity for original thought—these and other things step in to hinder the march towards the eagerly sought perfection, and mar the efforts of the zealous and well intentioned to whom

Nature has been more prodigal of her gifts, who have the vision to see, but not the strength to perform alone.

For all that, Baroda has maintained her reputation. Those who judge superficially will note the want of roads, the slowness and unpunctuality of her railways, and other matters which appeal chiefly to the personal convenience or the artistic eye of the traveller. It is only those who know her from within who can judge the immense advance she has made in political science and administrative art since the Maharaja came to rule over her. If her people are poor, so is all India; and if they are ignorant, so is all India; if they are in debt, can British India show any better record? Baroda, like her bigger sister, British India, like the Imperial Government itself, is still seeking for means to grapple effectively with the problems which have baffled the wiser heads and the longer purse; she is not too proud to learn from, and to profit by, the experience of those who are striving towards the same goal, and when they have achieved the millennium, she will not be far behind. It is the chiefest glory of the Maharaja that he was among the first, if not actually the first, at any rate among the Princes who owe little or nothing to direct British administration, to introduce, to maintain, and to extend the blessings of good government into his State. The people are happy; justice is administered well and without reproach; where once the roads were unsafe, and the jungles were a harbour for thieves, crime of the more serious kind is now remarkable for its absence; castes and creeds live in harmony with one another; the government is mild and tolerant.

Sayaji Rao is more than the Maharaja: he is an institution. With all the foibles and weaknesses which he shares with other men, he has shown himself a man. When he too has run his natural course, his people will transfer their allegiance to his successor, who is showing himself

in every way worthy of it. But it is no detraction of him to say that the Maharaja will leave a gap hard to fill in the hearts of the people whom he has loved, and who love him; and it may well be that at his passing it will be said, as was said of William of Orange, that the little children cried in the streets.

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